

Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria:

An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits
of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria



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Declaration

I hereby declare that my dissertation entitled *Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria* is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria

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Abstract

In recent decades, Nigeria has repeatedly had low pass rates in examinations taken at the end of secondary school. There are claims that the low student achievements are largely because Nigerian children do not read for pleasure, even though these claims lack the backing of empirical research. This qualitative study therefore explores reading for pleasure done by a group of 9–12 year olds in a book club in Nigeria. It aims to shed light on the extent to which the children read, how, what, when and why they read, and the factors that affect their engagement with reading for pleasure. A study of children's reading habits is important as some research suggests that reading for pleasure may offer many benefits including reading proficiency, increased general knowledge, and improved vocabulary.

Through an interpretivist theoretical perspective, the study gathered data using the methods of collage making, observation, questionnaire, and interviews. Findings indicate that the participants read for pleasure, though their level of engagement with reading for pleasure differs. All the participants read printed books, and a few participants also read digitally. Popular reading materials include fiction, comics, factual books, crime and detective books, and adventure books. The children have different motivations for reading, but many state that reading is fun and interesting.

Some research done in the United States and the United Kingdom indicates that factors such as availability of books, choice of texts, pedagogies of reading and an enabling adult affect children's engagement with reading for pleasure. This study examined the relevance of these factors to the participants' reading habits and found that the reading engagement of all the participants may have been, in varying degrees, influenced by them. Other factors that possibly affected the participants' reading habits were the reading environment, reading aloud, and the availability of social networks and affordances that support leisure reading. The findings could provide guidance on practices that strengthen children's engagement in reading for pleasure.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| DfID | Department for International Development |
| ERIC | Everyone Reads in Class |
| ESSPIN | Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria |
| ISBN | International Standard Book Number |
| ISSN | International Standard Serial Number |
| IOE | Institute of Education |
| KBC | Krown Book Club |
| MLA | Monitoring Learning Achievement |
| NALABE | National Assessment of Learning Achievement in Basic Education |
| NEPA | National Electricity Power Authority |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PIRLS | Progress in International Reading Literacy Study |
| PISA | Programme for International Student Assessment |
| RfP | Reading for Pleasure |
| RIF | Reading Is Fundamental |
| RS | Running Start |
| UBEC | Universal Basic Education Commission |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WASSCE | West African Senior School Certificate Examination |
| Y5 | Year Five |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This is a study of the reading habits of a small group of 9–12 year olds in a children’s book club in a city in Nigeria. It would be safe to say that all the participants of the study were from middle to high income families as the participants attend private, fee-paying schools, and some of them regularly travel with their families on vacations to countries abroad. Attendance at the book club is by paid registration of an amount that the average family cannot afford to pay, further lending evidence to confirm the affluent background of the participants.

Using data sourced from the participants’ collages, from observation, and from the participants’ questionnaires and interviews, I explore the extent to which the children read, and how, what, when and why they read both within the book club and outside it. I also examine the factors that affect their engagement with Reading for Pleasure (RfP) including the social networks and affordances that exist to support their leisure reading. In this introductory chapter, I give a brief background to current educational outcomes at the secondary school level in Nigeria, explain how my interest in the study developed, suggest the significance of the study, and outline the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background

With an estimated population of 198 million people, Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country (Arobani, 2018). However, about half of the country’s population live below the poverty line, and the life expectancy at birth in 2015 was 53.4 years (Data World Bank, 2016). These indicators of under-development are not altogether surprising. This is because research indicates that primary education plays a key role in advancement in developing countries such as Nigeria (Verspoor, 2005; Hardman, Abd-Kadir, & Smith, 2008), but unfortunately, in the past decades, student achievement in Nigeria has been repeatedly low. Secondary school achievement often builds on primary school learning, and of the 1,692,435 candidates that sat for the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in May/June 2014, fewer than a third obtained credits in five subjects and above, including English Language and Mathematics (Adesulu, 2014). In subsequent years, there has been a slight improvement in the results, and in 2018, 49.98 per cent of the 1,572,396 candidates that sat the WASSCE obtained credits in five subjects and above including English Language and Mathematics (Adesulu,

2018). These results may be seen as an indication of the educational attainment at the primary level as secondary level outcomes do not significantly differ from primary level's.

Nigeria does not have a national system to assess learning in primary school, but in the 2003 UNESCO-UNICEF Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project (which provides for Nigeria one of the few nationally-based achievement monitoring studies in primary schools), the performance of Nigerian students was found to be not only poor, but the weakest in the continent (ESSPIN, 2009). In 2011, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the Nigerian government agency that oversees education in primary and junior secondary levels, conducted the National Assessment of Learning Achievement in Basic Education (NALABE) in primaries 4, 5, and 6 as well as in Junior Secondary School 1 (JSS 1) (UBEC, 2013). The results of the studies which utilized achievement tests in English language, mathematics and life skills showed that the national average ranged from 41.08 per cent (JSS 1) to 52.94 per cent (Primary 6) in performance in mathematics, and from 47.66 per cent (JSS 1) to 60.38 per cent (Primary 5) in performance in English language. Hardman *et al.* (2008) identified the improvement of the primary education system as one of Nigeria's main challenges. According to a recent World Bank document on education in Nigeria, "The quality of basic education, measured in terms of student learning outcomes, is also low in Nigeria...only 31 and 39 percent of registered students passed the 2014 and 2015 West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination, respectively" (World Bank Report No: 115391-NG, 2017, pp. 4-5).

The poor quality of educational outcomes in Nigeria has been troubling to the government and people of Nigeria, especially as education has been linked to enhanced life chances (Berger & Fisher, 2013; DfID, 2013a). In 2010/11, the Federal Ministry of Education devised 'The 4-Year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector, 2011-2015' (Federal Ministry of Education, 2012). The plan had six focal areas: Strengthening the Institutional Management of Education, Access and Equity, Standard and Quality Assurance, Teacher Education and Development, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and Funding, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization. It acknowledged that Access and Equity and Standard and Quality Assurance represented the areas of basic challenges in Nigeria's education sector and aimed to provide solutions to these challenges by addressing the four other focal points. Sadly, years later and a regime change midway, the plan remains largely unimplemented.

In the past few years, UBEC has introduced in specific localities in Nigeria a few projects such as Girl-Child Project in Chibok, Borno State (2011-2015), and E-Library Project in Ohazu 1,

Abia State (2015-2017) (UBEC, 2018). The Nigerian government also collaborated with the Department for International Development (DFID)-supported Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) to implement several interventions in the education sector. The ESSPIN interventions – which focus on school improvement, teacher training, and girls’ education, and are limited to fewer than half of the 36 states in Nigeria – have achieved some positive results, but learning outcomes in Nigeria are still very low (DfID, 2013b). For example, recent composite survey results for learning outcomes indicate that Primary 4 pupils in ESSPIN intervention schools scored 9 per cent in reading comprehension, compared with 2 per cent in non-intervention schools (*ibid.*). These findings confirm that “The overarching challenge facing Nigeria’s education system is to raise the desperately low levels of pupil achievement” (ESSPIN Experiences, 2011, p. 4).

Educationists have linked the low student achievement to the absence of a reading culture, that is regular engagement in reading, and made repeated calls for the promotion of recreational reading in Nigerian children and youths (Adesulu, 2016; Daily Post Staff, 2014; Adekunle, 2017). Whilst their claims of an absence of a reading culture do not appear to be based on any empirical studies, the argument for the promotion of recreational reading in Nigerian children should not be dismissed as several research-based studies indicate possible advantages of RfP, by which I mean, reading that is done voluntarily because of the pleasure that the reader anticipates s/he will get from the activity. For example, it has been claimed that:

Reading can change your life, it can inform, motivate, inspire and elevate; but it must be reading you do for yourself, at your own pace, in your way, and that has a bearing on your background, interests, values, beliefs and aspirations (Woods, 2001, p. 75).

Recurring evidence, most of which will be discussed more extensively in the literature review, suggests that RfP may offer many benefits including: positive impact on academic achievement (Sullivan & Brown, 2015), reading proficiency (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008; Clark, 2013), increased general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993), vocabulary development (Chew & Krashen, 2017; Everhart, Angelos, & McGriff, 2002), writing ability (Barrs & Cork, 2001; Nicholson, 2006; Parry & Taylor, 2018), language acquisition (Krashen, 2014), children’s attainment and their attitudes to reading (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Safford, 2014), and positive emotional and social consequences (Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009; Woods, 2001). Also, Cliff Hodges (2010a)

argues that in addition to providing pleasure, reading literature helps in cultivating imagination, an argument supported by Cremin (2015).

Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000, an international survey of reading, mathematical and scientific literacies among 15 year olds, suggest that RfP could be an important indicator of the future success of a child, even more important than the family's socio-economic status (OECD, 2002), a notion supported by Wilhelm (2017) and Lockwood (2008). Based on an overview of several studies on RfP, the National Literacy Trust has suggested that RfP may be a way to combat social exclusion and raise educational standards (Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

Based on these suggestions that RfP may offer many benefits, there is need to examine the reading habits of children in Nigeria. There are assertions that there has been a decline in reading in Nigeria, and/or that most children in Nigeria do not engage in leisure reading (Dapam, 2014; Ilogho, 2015; Ukoha, 2015). However, from the studies done in Nigeria which will be further explored in my literature review, I have not found compelling evidence to support these claims. Whereas the studies carried out in Nigeria have centred on topics related to reading, such as, A Clinical Assessment of Students' Motivation to Read (Okebukola, 2007), Effects of Environmental Factors on Students' Reading Habits (Fatimayin, 2012), The Use of ICTs and Audiovisual Resources in Developing Children's Reading Habits in Nigeria (Igvesi, Chimah, & Nwachukwu, 2012, 2012), Effect of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students: A Case Study of the Students of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State (Oriogu, Subair, Oriogu-Ogbuiyi, & Ogbuiyi, 2017), and A Critical Appraisal of the Impact of Reading Culture on Secondary School Students' Learning of Oral English in Ilesa West Local Government Area of Osun State (Oribabor, 2014), I have seen no report of an empirical study that specifically investigated the extent to which the Nigerian children read for pleasure. There is therefore need to examine the reading habits of Nigerian children with the aim of finding out the extent to which they read for pleasure.

1.2 My Interest in the Study

I grew up in an average middle class family in Nigeria with well-educated parents who were neither rich nor poor. I was exposed to books, especially literature, very early in life. I fell in love with books and formed the habit of reading, a habit that has stayed with me through the years. Through the books I read, my worldview expanded and I got to know about places and people outside my immediate environment. As my worldview expanded, so did my dreams of

a life that would not be limited or confined by the boundaries of my environment. Some of the dreams led me to far away lands, and in 2011, I earned a Master's degree from a prestigious university abroad. I believe that reading books like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* may have opened my mind to possibilities and shaped my thinking.

Armed with a Master's degree in Literature & Creative Writing, I returned to Nigeria and established MyRainbowBooks, a company that makes personalized storybooks for children. Alongside this, I opened a weekend book club for children, and organized holiday camps for children. Within a short time, I had calls and emails from different people who wanted us to publish stories that they or their children had written. I wanted to contribute in some way to the development of my country, and the queries gave me a clue about what to do. I decided that MyRainbowBooks would organize an annual, free-to-enter creative writing competition for children in Nigeria, and thereafter, publish the best entries. Although I was not a teacher, I was interested in children and in children's literacy. I was therefore elated when many children responded to the invitation to send in entries for the competition. However, as I read through the entries, I was saddened by their quality. The children's writing skills could not match the enthusiasm and interest they displayed.

For many years, I had read about the dismal performance of Nigerian students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations but not fully grasped the magnitude of the problem, nor given a thought to the underlying problem(s). Through the competition entries received, I had a better understanding of what may be one of the underlying causes of Nigeria's poor educational outcomes – many Nigerian children had not developed the skill to read and/or write at the level expected of them. Concerned about my observations, I began to research strategies that would help the children to develop their reading and writing skills. In my research, I repeatedly came across the words 'independent reading' and 'RfP'. My interest in RfP was thereby piqued. I desired to know more about RfP, its potential, how engaged Nigerian children were in it, and how it could be used to improve Nigeria's education system.

It was therefore natural that when I decided to return to university for doctoral studies, I would seek to research RfP in Nigeria. My initial plan was to do an experiment that would show the impact of RfP on student achievement in Nigeria. However, discussions with my supervisor helped me to realize that such a study may not be very feasible. Also, a review of the literature on reading in Nigeria revealed a gap in the studies carried out in Nigeria: I did not see any

study that explored the reading habits of primary school children in Nigeria. I was therefore motivated to carry out this study because I believed that an exploration of the reading habits of a selected group of children would reveal the extent to which these children read, what factors affected their engagement with RfP, and possibly, the strategies that could help them to become more engaged readers.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

While the objective of my study is to explore RfP in 9–12 year olds in a children’s book club in Nigeria, the larger purpose is to shed light on the extent to which these children read, how, what, when and why they read, and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP so that parents and schools may be guided on how they can build or strengthen social networks, affordances and opportunities that encourage and support children’s leisure reading at home and at school. In this way, the study might, perhaps, go some way towards contributing to an improvement of Nigeria’s primary education system.

I chose to carry out a case study of 9–12 year olds because evidence suggests that children’s experiences with reading in the elementary school years affect their subsequent school experiences and reading competence (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997, 1998; Cullinan, 2000). Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) state that, “Early success at reading acquisition is one of the keys that unlocks a lifetime of reading habits” (p. 943). This statement is based on a study in the USA where a group of 1st-graders with an average age of 7 years 1 month were administered a battery of reading tasks. Ten years later, the participants were followed up as 11th-graders and administered measures of exposure to print, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and general knowledge. It was found that first-grade reading ability was a strong predictor of all of the 11th-grade outcomes. Although my study participants are slightly older than the 1st-graders, they are still within the critical age range in the formation of reading habits.

The notion that an early start in reading is important in predicting a lifetime of reading experience is supported by findings from Cunningham and Stanovich’s (1998) examination of the contribution that independent reading makes toward reading ability, aspects of verbal intelligence, and general knowledge. According to Cunningham and Stanovich (1998), “it is difficult to overstate the importance of getting children off to an early successful start in reading” (p. 147). Further, based on her review of the research literature about the effects of independent reading on school achievement and the identification of common factors in

programmes designed to promote independent reading, Cullinan (2000) argues that “Primary and elementary school ages are critical periods in the development of reading skill and in the formation of lifelong reading habits” (*ibid.*, p. 12).

Additionally, studies indicate that young people’s reading motivation and attitude towards reading decline with age (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998; Clark, 2011; Clark, 2013), further showing the need to get children committed to leisure reading in the primary years. Therefore, an exploration of RfP in 9–12 year olds may indicate strategies that could help Nigerian children to develop a love for reading when they are still young, and thereby form a lifelong habit of reading. The research will provide empirical evidence from Nigeria to complement the wealth of research in the Western world, and at the same time, examine the applicability of the findings in the Western world to African cultures, especially Nigeria. Specifically, it could show whether the factors that affect RfP identified in studies done in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) are relevant in Nigeria, and what cultural factors specific to Nigeria affect children’s RfP there.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is built on thematically structured chapters – the introduction (Chapter 1), literature review (Chapter 2), methodology (Chapter 3), findings (Chapters 4-6) and conclusions (Chapter 7). In the literature review, I discuss critical literature about reading, what counts as RfP, digital reading, and the benefits of, and factors that affect, RfP. Thereafter, I proceed to discuss RfP in Nigeria, including the perception of how Nigerian children read, and research findings on RfP in Nigeria. Based on the review of the existing literature, I present the need for my study and the research questions that will guide it. In Chapter 3, I present a methodological plan for my study, the design of my project, the methods of data collection and analysis, the pilot studies and the main study. Chapter 3 also shows how the research framework is guided and supported by the existing literature and ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations. In Chapters 4-6, I present and analyse the data, and using findings from these, address the three research questions that guided the study. In Chapter 7, which is the final chapter, I write the conclusions and make suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review some of the critical literature pertaining to RfP and establish a theoretical framework for my study. I begin the chapter by exploring reading, RfP, what counts as reading, and digital reading. Subsequently, I critically examine the related literature on the benefits of RfP, factors that affect RfP, and RfP in Nigeria; the discussion on the benefits of RfP comes first in order to show why RfP matters, thereby contextualising what follows. The review of research in Nigeria comes at the end as it reveals the gaps that exist in the literature on RfP in Nigeria, and thereby justifies the study. Thereafter, I close the chapter with the three research questions that I have formulated from the literature review.

2.1 Of Reading and of Reading for Pleasure

In this thesis, reading is defined as “the process of constructing meaning from written texts” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 7), and “is a process in which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the reader act together to produce meaning” (*ibid.*, p. 8). Anderson *et al.*’s definitions of reading are based on their analyses of studies on reading comprehension which suggest that readers integrate information in the text with the knowledge they have to construe the meaning of the text. Readers here refer to people who regularly engage in reading whether it be for work, school, or pleasure purposes, while ‘habitual readers’, used interchangeably with ‘engaged readers’, are “those who consciously include reading amongst the range of activities with which they voluntarily occupy their time” (Cliff Hodges, 2010b, p. 182). Also, engaged readers have positive attitudes to reading, choose to read, and find reading fulfilling (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). According to Meek (1988), practised readers, that is, people who often read for pleasure, are usually patient with the beginnings of books and will go on reading a book even when the beginning is uncertain because of the anticipated pleasure.

‘Pleasure’ in this thesis refers to “special kinds of moods, such as elation, joy and amusement” (Ryle, 2009, p. 92) and is also used to describe when someone is enjoying an activity and is so absorbed in it that s/he is reluctant to stop (*ibid.*). The term ‘RfP’, which is a sub-set of reading and is used here interchangeably with ‘recreational reading’, ‘leisure reading’, ‘independent reading’ and ‘voluntary reading’, refers to “the volitional act of reading undertaken by individuals and groups, and by children and adults” (Cremin *et al.*, 2014, p. 6), and “also refers

to reading that having begun at someone else's request we continue because we are interested in it" (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, p. 5). Based on the definitions of 'reading' and 'pleasure', 'RfP' is also the volitional act of reading that is undertaken by individuals and groups because of the feeling of enjoyment or satisfaction that they get from the act.

Anderson *et al.*'s definitions of reading tie in with Rosenblatt's (1978/1994) notion of reading as a two-way transaction between the reader and the text as both works suggest that the meaning of the text does not lie solely in the written words, but is also dependent on the reader's experience, such that different people may have different interpretations of the same text. Rosenblatt is of the opinion that when a text leaves the author's hands, it remains paper and ink until a reader evokes a literary work from it. This evocation, which is what readers experience during their intercourse with the text, is what Rosenblatt calls the 'poem'. According to Rosenblatt, the text is "a set or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols" (*ibid.*, p. 12), while what she calls the 'poem' is the reader's experience with the text, or what the reader creates out of the text i.e. their 'reading' of it.

Rosenblatt (1978/1994) insists that there is no such thing as a generic reader, adding that, the poem "must be thought of as an event in time" (*ibid.*, p. 12). She further argues that "The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality" (*ibid.*, p. 12) and "The transaction (of reading) will involve not only the past experience but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader" (*ibid.*, p. 20). She argues that factors such as gender, cultural environment, ethnic and socioeconomic background are important in the transaction as they affect the reader's reading experience. When readers read a text, the text activates certain elements in their past experiences that have become linked with the verbal symbols. The meaning of the text comes *not* solely from the text itself, but from the network of relationships of the factors in the transaction. Thus, if a specific reader reads the same text at a different time, a different poem is evoked as the reader's experience of the text will differ from his/her previous experience(s) of the same text. However, Rosenblatt also points out that in order for the reader's interpretation of the text to be valid, it should have a textual connection meaning that there should be a connection between the words of the text and the reader's interpretation of the text.

Rosenblatt's view of reading as a transaction is based on over 40 years of observing and reflecting on readers' involvements with various texts by writers such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Joyce. For two decades, she systematically pursued the study in a course she taught to

undergraduate and graduate students. Through various techniques, she gathered evidence of what went on during reading, evidence on which her theory is based. For instance, when students were handed the same anonymous text to read and asked to jot down whatever came to them, Rosenblatt observed that the students had different responses and different interpretations of the text. Rosenblatt's ideas are important for my study as they inform me that construction of meaning is personal to each reader and that my study participants will have unique reading experiences; this understanding enables me to have an openness that allows me to construct meaning from the study's findings rather than from pre-conceived views.

Still on reading, Rosenblatt (1978/1994) writes that with regards to the reader's relationship to the text during reading, there are two types of reading - efferent or non-aesthetic reading and aesthetic reading. In efferent reading, the reader focuses his/her attention on the text and reads to obtain information, find a solution to a problem or gain knowledge of what actions to carry out. In this reading, the reader primarily focuses on the residue that will remain *after* the reading. Likely texts for this kind of reading are a cooking recipe, a history textbook, a newspaper article and an algebraic equation (*ibid.*). In contrast, in aesthetic reading, readers fulfil their primary purpose *during* the reading event and read for the enjoyment they get from reading the text. It would therefore appear that aesthetic reading, which is reading that is done primarily for the pleasure the reader anticipates from the activity, could be likened to RfP. The major distinctions between the two readings lie in the reader's stance and the activities s/he carries out in relation to the text. The reader's stance towards the text varies between a purely aesthetic stance, an efferent stance, and series of gradations between the two extremes (*ibid.*).

Rosenblatt suggests that literature such as Shakespeare's *Othello* is ideal for aesthetic reading as good poems, stories, novels and plays possess strong cognitive or intellectual or ideational elements to which the reader responds. However, she adds that "To adopt an aesthetic stance toward the items in a newspaper or toward the directions for constructing a radio, is possible, but would usually be very unrewarding" (*ibid.*, p. 34). This is debatable as there are people who enjoy reading newspapers, manuals and other non-fiction texts and use such texts for pleasure reading. Layne (2015) reports that in a study by Kletzien and Szabo (1998), when given the choice, the participating children chose non-fiction titles over narrative nearly half the time. The fact that these children voluntarily chose non-fiction even when they had other options suggests that they enjoyed reading non-fiction. Hall and Coles (1999) found similar preferences in their survey of the reading habits of children aged 10, 12 and 14. Further,

Alexander and Jarman (2018) provide evidence that some children enjoy reading science information books. Contrary to Rosenblatt's views on what texts are ideal for different readings, research evidence suggests that any kind of text may be used for RfP (Cremin *et al.*, 2014; Lockwood, 2008). In the next section, I will address why it is important to discuss what materials may be used for leisure reading, and thereafter, explore what counts as RfP.

2.2 What Counts as Reading for Pleasure

It is important to discuss what materials may be used for leisure reading because studies indicate that children's motivation to read and reading engagement are greatly influenced by their identities as readers or non-readers (Sainsbury & Clarkson, 2008; Hall, 2012; Cremin *et al.*, 2014), and their reading identities in turn are generally shaped by their teachers (Hall, 2012) and school reading practices (Levy, 2009; Cremin *et al.*, 2014) and influenced by their understanding of what leisure reading is. In other words, if children's out-of-school reading involves the materials used in school reading practices, they are likely to see themselves as readers. When children have self-perception as readers, they tend to read more and vice versa. Consequently, when schools do not recognize and validate what children read outside school, children tend to devalue their out-of-school reading practices and may not see themselves as readers or recognize the non-conventional readings they do as leisure reading. In the light of the above, and especially since leisure reading in schools differs according to context (Cremin *et al.*, 2014), it is needful to address what counts as RfP, and specifically, the materials that may be used for it.

RfP can take place anywhere, but requires the reader's volition and motivation, that is, the desire to read, and an anticipation of the satisfaction that s/he will gain from the reading experience (Cremin *et al.*, 2014; Lockwood, 2008). Cremin *et al.* (2014) argue that it can involve any kind of text, including non-fiction, comic, and newspaper, which may be in electronic or printed form and that readers have the right to stop reading a text at any time. Cremin *et al.*'s view of texts involved is supported by Lockwood (2008) who includes "the reading of popular as well as literary fiction, of comics and magazines as well as books, non-fiction as well as fiction, and electronic as well as printed texts" (*ibid.*, p. 1) within RfP. Both Cremin *et al.* and Lockwood base their claims on their research and their analysis of other studies on the topic. Cremin *et al.* (2014) report that during the 'Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Readers' project, teachers asked children in their classes to create a river collage that showed their leisure reading over a weekend by drawing, sticking on or writing

about anything they had read. The collages were taken to school so the children could share the reading they had done. Through the collages, the teachers discovered that the range of reading materials that the children read include bottle labels, DVD covers, magazines and comics, graphic novels and catalogues, books, fiction and non-fiction, poetry, newspapers, sports reports, and much more, and some of these through the internet. The teachers' view of what counts as reading significantly changed, and over time, they made some of the children's preferences available in school.

Among the range of reading materials that young people read outside of school are series. Findings from a large-scale survey of what young people in England are reading highlight the popularity of series among young readers and note that the popularity increased as the participants got older (Maynard, Mackay, & Smyth, 2008). Series traditionally refer to books with a sequence of related stories that have the same characters and are usually written by the same author, but in recent times have extended to include books with an identical format (Watson, 2000). Smith and Wilhelm (2002) theorize that the enjoyment of series stems from the fact that the series scaffold the engagement of the reader. They suggest that when readers imagine the character and situation in one book, it supports envisioning the next book and thereby provides quicker competence. Watson (2000) who believes that the role of series in reading development is incalculable has a remarkable explanation for the appeal of series:

A Year 6 child once explained to me why he preferred a series to single novels: when you begin a new novel, he explained, it is like going into a room full of strangers, but reading the latest book in a series which you already know is *like going into a room full of friends* (author's italics) (*ibid.*, p. 6).

With a new book, a reader has to work out the different characters and their relationship with one another, their activities as well as their mannerisms and voices. These require watchfulness and usually take time, whereas with subsequent books in a series, the reader is already familiar with the different characters and nature of the plot and therefore better able to easily grasp and enjoy the story. Another appeal of series is the promise of related but separate stories that give continued satisfaction.

Comics are also popular among young readers; there is evidence that when teenage boys read for enjoyment, they tend to read newspapers and comics (OECD, 2010; Maynard *et al.*, 2008) whereas girls prefer to read fiction or magazines (OECD, 2010). Although comics do not

feature in school reading lists and readers of comics are usually regarded as reluctant readers or readers who lack reading skills (Serantes, 2018), Cremin *et al.* (2014) indicate that many children habitually read comics and magazines. According to Evans (2013), “Comics and graphic novels have been the catalyst that turned many children and adults, who could read, but didn’t want to read, into readers” (p. 233). A study in Ontario that explores young adults’ experiences of reading comics indicates that young people like comics for different reasons, some of which are: comics provide a high level of satisfaction but do not require a substantial time investment; comics are easy to read between work routines even when time is scarce; comics are relaxing, and create the possibility for a double speed of reading as they have both texts and images (Serantes, 2018). The study participants discussed their experiences of reading comics in both printed and digital formats as well as their personal preferences. This is not unusual as some studies on reading indicate that leisure reading is no longer limited to printed books but includes interacting with texts in electronic formats (Clark & Douglas, 2011; Burnett & Wilkinson, 2005). For this reason, I shall briefly explore digital reading in the following section.

2.3 Digital Reading

With the advancement of technology, children’s literacy practices now involve use of the virtual world and many children move between online and offline domains with ease (Pahl & Burnett, 2013; Marsh, 2011; Hannaford & Beavis 2017). Equally, when children read for pleasure, they no longer solely use printed materials, but interact with texts in different formats, most notably through digital reading. For instance, a survey of the reading habits of over 8000 primary and secondary schools in England reveals that of the preferred reading materials outside of school, text messages, magazines, websites and emails were most popular (Clark & Douglas, 2011). Marsh’s (2011) examination of the literacy practices of children ages 5-11 as they engaged in out-of-school use of virtual worlds further highlights that increasingly, children move between online and offline spaces as they read for pleasure. This is important as it reminds us that any discussion of children’s engagement with RfP is not complete without a discussion of digital reading. Similarly, in the provision of materials for children’s reading, some children’s preference for digital texts (Clark & Douglas, 2011) should be taken into consideration.

Burnett & Wilkinson’s (2005) study of the out-of-school use of the internet by a group of Year 6 children also provides evidence that there are children who are experienced and enthusiastic

users of the internet who use it primarily outside the classroom. Based on findings from the study, Burnett & Wilkinson suggest that web-based reading offers new possibilities for engaging with texts; such possibilities include hyperlinks that can lead readers to other websites where among other things, they may do further reading or find the meaning of words they do not understand. Readers can also share the text they read with others by simply sending the web-link to the text. Additionally, readers may make and delete comments on the texts they read digitally. Accordingly, Burnett & Wilkinson (2005) suggest that among other things, there should be provision for purposeful and motivating opportunities for children's internet use in classrooms. Burnett, Dickinson, Myers, and Merchant (2006) demonstrate how technology could be used to promote new literacy practices in the classroom. In a school-based project with teachers of 8-10 year olds, 12 children from 2 schools used emails to communicate with a peer from among the participants. Analyses of the emails reveal that technology can transform the way children write as well as the kinds of texts they produce as the children incorporated visual elements such as drawings and photographs to create multimodal texts. Accordingly, the researchers argue that there is a need to incorporate new literacies into classroom life.

Hannaford & Beavis' (2017) exploration of the role of digital worlds and digital literacies in the lives of two globally mobile girls also shows the potential richness of children's literacy practices when children engage collaboratively in both online and offline interfaces. In the study, 10 year old Lihua and her 8 year old sister, Lucy, found a welcoming and constant space in the digital world of Club Penguin in the first year of their family's global relocation. In the months they waited for the arrival of their household goods and effects, even without the internet, the girls continued to integrate the Club Penguin world into their real-world by using the prop of a sofa as the Club Penguin space and by using their imaginations to create familiar characters and actions. Although the study focused on digital literacy rather than RfP, it involved leisure reading as the children's literacy practices were of their volition and included reading. Studies suggest that reading on screen often boosts the reading of paper-based texts and that technology could be used to boost children's literacy practices (Cremin *et al.*, 2014; Burnett *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, there are arguments that classrooms should recognize the new forms of texts that children interact with outside of school and that multimodal texts should be included in the curriculum (Bearne, 2003; Merchant, Dickinson, Burnett, & Myers, 2006) as to do otherwise would be risking a loss of many of the assets that children bring from their home literacy practices (Pahl & Burnett, 2013). Further, Cremin *et al.* (2014) argue that "The emphasis on print texts (and by implication books) is likely to hold back the development of

wider reading repertoires and further reduce the potential for pleasurable engagement in reading” (p. 17). What this means is that if on the other hand, digital reading is widely recognized and actively encouraged within and outside schools, more children are likely to become better engaged readers.

Whilst it is not within the scope of this study to explore digital reading in-depth, the above discussion gives evidence that some of the leisure reading children do is done digitally and justifies why a study of children’s reading habits would not be complete without a mention of digital reading. In the next section, I shall examine some potential benefits of RfP as Cremin’s (2007) review of existing literature suggests that in addition to the enjoyment it gives the reader, RfP has many benefits.

2.4 Benefits of Reading for Pleasure

2.4.1 Reading Proficiency

Several studies indicate the correlation between RfP and reading proficiency (Clark, 2013; Moje *et al.*, 2008). In an intensive study carried out to examine the relationship between the amount of reading and reading achievement, among the wide range of out-of-school activities that children spent their time on, reading was found to have the strongest association with reading comprehension, vocabulary and reading speed (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). Although the study is now over 30 years old and young people’s reading has changed since then, some recent studies confirm the link between leisure reading and reading proficiency. In addition, this study matters to me as it had participants in the same age range as my study participants. Reading, in Anderson *et al.*’s (1988) study, included the reading of books, comics, mail, newspapers and magazines. The subjects of the study, 155 fifth graders taken from two communities in Illinois, USA., were given activity forms to record a wide range of out-of-school activities for periods ranging from 8 to 26 weeks. The out-of-school activities included doing chores, doing homework, eating dinner, going out, listening to music, playing games, practising lessons, reading books, reading comics, reading mail, reading newspapers and magazines, and watching television. The children were also given three reading tests (to test reading comprehension, vocabulary and reading speed) twice, before and after the period of the completion of the activity forms. Data analysis showed that the reading of books had the greatest positive effect on reading proficiency, even though the reading of other materials, especially comics, also had significant influence on reading attainment. According to the study,

“the case can be made that reading books is a cause, not merely a reflection, of reading proficiency” (*ibid.*, p. 302). The authors’ claims are based on evidence from the study which showed that “the amount of time a child spends reading books is related to the child’s reading level in the fifth grade and growth in reading proficiency from the second to the fifth grade” (*ibid.*, p. 302).

Twenty years later, Moje *et al.* (2008) provide further evidence to support the influence of out-of-school reading on reading attainment. Through the use of mixed methods, the study examined the relationship between the out-of-school literacy practices of adolescents and their in-school achievement. Data were derived from a large-scale survey of literacy practices and motivations, a large-scale reading diagnostic, school records, writing samples, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic interviews and observations. The data were drawn from a predominantly Latino community in a large Midwestern city in the US where most residents lived below the federal poverty line. Analyses of the data revealed that increased and frequent reading have a positive relationship with in-school achievement, which was measured here using grades. However, the only type of reading that was found to have this positive association with achievement was novel reading. It was also observed that the positive influence of novel reading on academic achievement was limited to the English language arts and did not extend to achievement in Mathematics, Science and other subjects.

The observed lack of a relationship between reading and achievement in subjects other than those in the English language arts is perplexing and calls for further investigation. Moje *et al.* (2008) suggest that this may be because the reading the youths engage in “happens infrequently, or may be too different from school reading and writing to impact their achievement in domains other than English language arts...” (*ibid.*, p. 147). It must also be noted that the findings of Moje *et al.* (2008) cannot be generalized to all adolescents as the data used in the study represented only one portion of the adolescent population (*ibid.*).

The link between RfP and reading ability is not limited to reading that is done out-of-school but extends to reading done within school. In a longitudinal critical action research project, three English teachers from two urban secondary schools in the South of England were able to increase the motivation to read in their average and low-attaining Year 8 (12-13 year old) students (Westbrook, 2013). Using several strategies including reading aloud, the teachers reinstated the rapid reading of whole novels in their classes. The whole class read the main text together, and students chose a linked second novel to read independently. Data were generated

from interviews, observations and teacher discourse patterns, and analysis of the data revealed that in addition to an increased motivation to read, the students had increased speed in reading and improvement in reading attainment. However, it remains to be seen if the intervention would yield the same or similar results if performed on high-attaining students, or a hybrid of high-attaining, average and low-attaining students.

Findings from Clark (2013) also show a strong connection between children's and young people's reading and reading attainment. In the literacy survey which examined young people's reading and had 34,910 participants aged eight to 16, it was found that the participants who read outside of class daily were five times as likely to read above the expected level for their age compared with those who never read outside of class. Similarly, Cremin *et al.* (2014) provide evidence of a relationship between reading and reading attainment. A case study of two teachers, Steph and Eleanor, in the 'Building Communities of Readers' project, indicates that when the teachers implemented different practices that got the children to read more, there were significant improvements in reading scores of all the children in their classes. Notably, in a single academic year, every child in both classrooms (with 7–8 year olds and 9–10 year olds) had higher reading test scores and some children made substantive progress. It was acknowledged that while it was normal for children's reading abilities to get better as they mature, it was unusual for every child to improve, and the teachers attributed this to the children reading more actively and more widely.

However, not all research shows that RfP has an effect on reading proficiency (Otter, Hox, de Glopper, & Mellenbergh, 1995; Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998). In a longitudinal study that investigated the effects of home leisure reading on pupils' reading achievement in school, the results showed no support for the notion that leisure reading was an important factor in the development of reading proficiency at school (Otter *et al.*, 1995). The study which was carried out in the Netherlands had as subjects 736 students in grades 3,4,5 and 6 in 30 schools. Using the instrument of reading test, reading achievement was determined five times: at the beginning and end of grade 3, and at the end of grades 4, 5 and 6. The participants used diaries to measure the frequency of leisure time reading in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 during 8, 12, 6 and 10 weeks, respectively. Based on the results, Otter *et al.* (1995) conclude that "Leisure time reading may have an effect on the reading proficiency of students, only when (1) the amount of reading, (2) the quality of the reading process and (3) the quality of books being read reach certain threshold values" (pp. 12-13).

Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe (1998) support the view that leisure reading may not automatically lead to reading achievement. In a longitudinal study that sought to determine (a) the degree to which it is possible to predict later reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading pleasure, and reading frequency by earlier measures of the same variables; and (b) the degree to which the development of these four aspects of reading correlate, a cohort of 363 primary school children in the Netherlands was followed for five years. Three times each year, a variety of tests for reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading pleasure, and reading frequency was administered on the pupils. The results indicated that the scores for reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading pleasure, and reading frequency measured at a particular point in time can be predicted quite well by measures of the same variables at the preceding point in time. However, it was observed that there was no strong relation between RfP and frequency on the one hand, and reading comprehension and vocabulary on the other leading the researchers to suggest further research on the subject.

Regardless of findings from Otter *et al.* (1995) and Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe (1998), overwhelming evidence seems to indicate that RfP positively impacts reading proficiency.

2.4.2 Vocabulary and Language Acquisition

Research supports the interconnection of RfP, vocabulary development and language acquisition (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Chew & Krashen, 2017). For example, in an American study that assessed the effects of print exposure in 4th-, 5th- and 6th-grade children, RfP was found to have significant relations with vocabulary development, verbal fluency, general knowledge, and spelling (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991). The subjects of the study were 134 children recruited from a lower middle-class school in San Francisco, USA. The effects of general ability and decoding skill were statistically controlled before the examination of the relationship between reading and the criterion variables so as to counter the argument “that superior decoding ability leads to more print exposure and that decoding abilities are themselves related to vocabulary development because better decoding insures an accurate verbal context for inducing the meanings of unknown words” (*ibid.*, p. 265). In spite of these precautions, in the analyses of the results, reading still remained a unique predictor of vocabulary development, word knowledge and general knowledge.

Similarly, in a study that examined the relationship of early word-reading skills and the subsequent rate of vocabulary growth, assessments of written word-reading skills in the 4th grade and oral vocabulary knowledge in kindergarten and in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades were

collected from 604 participants (Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015). The major finding was that after controlling for kindergarten vocabulary level, 4th-grade reading-word skill was related to the rate of change in vocabulary growth between the 4th and 10th grades; that is, the more the reading done by a participant, the higher the rate of vocabulary growth.

A meta-analysis of studies done on extensive reading in English as a foreign language supports the suggestion that RfP could have an effect on language acquisition (Krashen, 2007). Lao and Krashen (2008), cited in Krashen (2014), give an example of this by narrating the story of a Chinese boy, Daniel, whose Mandarin proficiency began to decline after his relocation from China to the US. Daniel's concerned parents sent him to a Chinese Heritage school, and also made him attend a summer heritage language program. Daniel was not interested in either. However, his interest in Mandarin was spiked when Dr Lao gave him some storybooks, including a well-illustrated book, written in Mandarin. He got his mother to read the books to him, beginning with the illustrated book. As his mother read more and more Mandarin storybooks to him, Daniel's Mandarin began to improve.

Elley & Mangubhai (1983) also provide evidence of the influence of leisure reading on language acquisition. 380 Class 4 and 5 pupils from eight rural Fijian schools who had limited understanding of English language and very few books were selected for a study, and each class was provided with 250 interesting story books in English. 16 participating teachers were shown different methods of encouraging the pupils to read the books. The researchers administered pre- and post-tests on the participating pupils and on the control group of 234 pupils. Post-test results after eight months revealed that pupils exposed to reading in English progressed in reading and listening comprehension at twice the normal rate. Twenty months later, there were further gains which spread to related language skills.

2.4.3 Achievement in Writing

Meek (1988) argues that RfP introduces children to the discourse styles of various genres, and that children's writings reveal the lessons they have learned from the texts they read. This argument is supported by findings in a research project carried out in five primary schools in London which demonstrate the influence of children's reading on their writing (Barrs & Cork, 2001). In the study which involved six Y5 teachers and five primary schools in greater London, teachers introduced challenging literature to children throughout a particular school year. The literacy lesson involved both reading and writing, with the teachers reading, and sometimes re-

reading, the texts aloud to the children. Even though this was done in class, the underlying assumption was that the children would enjoy the reading and this guided the pedagogic practices adopted by the teachers, hence the study involved RfP. Writing samples of 18 children across the six classes were collected throughout the year and examined for any developments that may have taken place in the children's writings. The examination revealed that many of the children had adopted the writing styles and themes they found in the books they read.

Barrs (2000) suggests that when children develop an appreciation of the text, they become admirers of the writer, and imitate the writing style of the writer, though she does not state if the children do this consciously or unconsciously. In her argument for the role of reading in the development of writing, she writes that "the direct teaching of written language features is no substitute for extensive experience of written language" (*ibid.*, p. 54), and further states that, "It seems unlikely that there can be any fundamental writing development without reading development, and vice versa" (*ibid.*, p. 59). However, the latter statement seems to suggest that the relationship between reading and writing is correlational, and that writing has as much influence on the development of reading as reading has on the development of writing, a notion supported by theorists such as Scholes (1985). While it cannot be argued that reading and writing are not intertwined, some literature, including Barrs & Cork (2001) and Nicholson (2006), suggests the idea of the relationship being more causal (i.e. leisure reading influences writing) than correlational.

In 2002, London's Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) set up a project known as RaWpower (Reading and Writing power) which put literature at the heart of the literacy curriculum, and further explored the depth of the influence of children's reading on their writing (Nicholson, 2006). The project involved seven Year 5 and 6 teachers from seven schools in the London Borough of Southwark and had sessions where the teachers did 'aesthetic reading' (in this case, reading that "involves an appreciation of the sounds of the words" (*ibid.*, p. 12)) of well-chosen texts with strong, literary styles to ensure that the children would enjoy the reading. The teaching approaches also focused on talking about books and reading, the use of drama and role-play and developing a writing workshop. Again, when the writing samples of the children were examined, it was observed that a number of the children wrote in styles similar to the styles in the books they had read.

Parry & Taylor (2018) provide additional evidence to substantiate the claims that leisure reading influences children's writing styles. In a recent doctoral research project, children were

surveyed about their reading habits and preferences and given an independent writing journal to write in both in their classrooms and at home. The children wrote in a range of genres and styles, including narrative, prose, non-fiction, poetry, labelled illustrations, songs and comics. An examination of their writings revealed that they were far more likely to write in a genre that they said they enjoyed reading. For example, a boy named Andy created panels of a comic strip about Pokemon. A survey of Andy's reading habits revealed that the text he had recently read for fun was *Pokemon Go! Field Guide*.

2.4.4 Increased Knowledge

Building on their previous work, Stanovich & Cunningham (1993) further explored the association between print exposure and knowledge acquisition. In a study of 268 college students recruited from two state universities in the western United States, the researchers examined whether individual differences in print exposure could account for differences in acquired knowledge. Print exposure measures, television exposure measures and general knowledge measures were taken and analysed. In spite of the fact that the researchers had statistically controlled individual differences, the results indicated that print exposure is a significant contributor to acquired knowledge. These findings are suggestive that frequent reading could lead to increased knowledge and have a positive impact on student achievement.

In her arguments on the role of literature in English education, Cliff Hodges (2010a) states that literature offers access to knowledge. Although this benefit is linked to the reading of literature, it is worth mentioning as RfP often involves the reading of literature such as novels, plays, and poems (Barrs & Cork, 2001; Gordon, 2018; Nicholson, 2006) and literature is part of the materials used for leisure reading. As evidence, Cliff Hodges (2010a) narrates the experiences of some of the 12-13 year old students who had participated in some previous research she had undertaken:

Lily wrote that Judith Kerr's *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* really helped her understand what happened in the Second World War. Michael Morpurgo's *Twist of Gold*, a novel about two children who leave their mother dying during the 19th-century Irish potato famine and undertake a journey across America to find their father, she found to be "amazing..." (pp. 66-67).

Cliff Hodges is of the view that in addition to the pleasure of reading, readers gain knowledge from reading such novels.

2.4.5 Influence on Maths

Recent research from the Institute of Education (IOE) indicates that RfP has a positive influence on maths (Sellgren, 2013; Sullivan & Brown, 2015). The longitudinal study examined the reading behaviour of about 6000 people who were all born in the same week in 1970 (the 1970 British Cohort Study) and compared this with their cognitive test scores in vocabulary, maths and spellings (Sullivan & Brown, 2015). The reading materials included books, as well as newspapers, comics and magazines. The findings showed that at age 16, children who from childhood regularly read for pleasure had a 14.4 per cent advantage in vocabulary, 9.9 per cent advantage in maths, and 8.6 per cent advantage in spelling, over those who did not. Through interviews and questionnaires administered to the mothers of the cohorts when the cohorts were aged 5, 10 and 16, data were gathered on socio-economic background, and parental reading environment, behaviour and ability. Parents' education was found to be more important than parents' economic resources in the cognitive tests. It was also observed that although parents' education had influence on vocabulary, the participants' engagement with RfP had far more impact than parents' education on all three tests. Test scores for science, history and other subjects were not available for analysis, but according to the above research, RfP may have a significant influence on all subject areas. This would tie in with the comment of the research co-author, Dr Alice Sullivan, that "it is likely that strong reading ability will enable children to absorb and understand new information and affect their attainment in all subjects" (Sellgren, 2013). At the same time, the influence of RfP on science, history and other subjects would support the hypothesis that RfP could be used to raise student achievement.

2.4.6 Cultivation of One's Imagination

Based on research, there are arguments that reading fiction helps in the cultivation of the reader's imagination (Cliff Hodges, 2010a; Gillespie, 1994; Pihl & Kooij, 2016). Cliff Hodges (2010a) shares excerpts from some 12-13 year old students in her research who narrate experiences where their imaginations have been excited and they have explored possible worlds while reading literature. For example, one girl, Andie, wrote that she loves to read thrillers, sci-fi, horror, fantasy and some true-life stories because reading these genres "takes me away to somewhere else and even though you know most of it is never going to happen there is still hope and possibilities" (*ibid.*, p. 66). Indeed, Andie admitted that she was so deeply engaged with what she read that when she read *The Road of the Dead*, she grieved for the murdered girl, Rachel. Cliff Hodges (2010a) also gives accounts of other young readers who

give specific instances of how they exercised their imagination while reading fiction; these accounts provide evidence of the connection between literature reading and imagination and also support Rosenblatt's (1938/1995) statement that "Through the medium of literature we participate in imaginary situations..." (p. 37).

One of the arguments Gillespie (1994) offers for reading literature is:

its capacity to stimulate the imagination, to offer different perspectives and wider worlds that the young reader can wander at leisure and experience in safety, without pressure or judgement. We read ourselves imaginatively into other lives and by this act expand the pages of our own (p. 17).

Gillespie narrates the experience of American writer, Sandra Cisneros published in the essay, *Ghosts and Voices: Writing from Obsession* (1990). In the essay, Cisneros writes about her childhood experiences of reading books such as *The Little House*, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. Through these books, "she was transported to other worlds, instructed about other people and possibilities, offered hopefulness, and inspired to be a writer herself" (*ibid.*, p. 17). Cisneros' experience provides evidence that literature may have the potential to excite children's imagination and help them to extend the boundaries of their lives. Furthermore, Chambers (1985) writes that, "Literature offers us images to think with" (*ibid.*, p. 3) and narrates how the Aesop fables he heard when he was a 5 year old boy provided images for him to write his own versions of three of Aesop's tales about Fox many years later. Chambers also argues that literature offers the best expression of the human imagination and is the most useful means through which we can come to grips with our ideas about ourselves.

Findings from The Multiplicity project, a research and development project and an intervention study, conducted at two elementary schools in Norway from 2007 to 2011 also support the claims that reading literature has many benefits including the stimulation of children's imagination (Pihl & Kooij, 2016). The study – which had as participants 14 multilingual learners who were good, average and poor readers – aimed at developing reading engagement through literature-based literacy education, collaboration between teachers and librarians and the extensive use of library resources. In the project, voluntary reading in and out of school was prioritized, and the major focus was on reading fiction. The children had regular access to a broad range of literature and were encouraged to read through the dramatization of stories they read, recommendation of books, writing of stories related to their readings, and the sharing

of their reading experiences with the teachers and other children. Data were derived from interviews, and the analysis of the data revealed that the reading experiences stirred in some children the desire to read more, helped some participants to have a vision for the future, and were believed to have stimulated the imagination of some children. Ameenah, one of the participants, believes that she developed more imagination when she started reading more books (Pihl & Kooij, 2016).

2.5 Factors that Affect Reading for Pleasure

Even though research indicates that RfP has many benefits, a survey of the reading achievement of 10 year olds carried out in 35 countries in 2001 (Twist, Sainsbury, Woodthorpe, & Whetton, 2003) and repeated in 40 countries in 2006 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007) threw up evidence that suggests that there are many children and adolescents who can read but are not recreational readers. Both surveys were research projects in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) series of studies which aim to conduct comparative studies of student achievement in school subjects and accordingly inform educational policies and practices around the world. Given the evidence from Twist et al (2003) and Mullis et al (2007), there is a need to investigate why some children and adolescents who can read are not habitual readers, and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP.

Based on her experience as a sixth-grade reading teacher who has been able to inspire her students to read and constantly earn high scores on reading assessments, Miller (2009) argues that everyone is a reader, and that given the right conditions, the inner reader in every child can be awakened. Fry (1985) provides evidence that supports Miller's (2009) argument. Fry (1985) writes about a 12 year old boy, Karnail, who could read but was not an experienced reader at the time Fry began his study with Karnail and other young readers. According to Fry, Karnail was not reluctant to read but had difficulty in beginning to read a story as he did not have enough reading experiences to help him enjoy the books he had come across. However, through Enid Blyton's *Well Done, Secret Seven* and *Good Work, Secret Seven*, reading became easy for Karnail and he got to like and enjoy the adventures in these and other books in the series.

Cremin *et al.* (2014) provide compelling evidence that children who may not want to read for pleasure may be influenced to do otherwise. For example, in the 'Building Communities of Readers' project, 10 year old Kasif avoided leisure reading even though he was adjudged a bright boy with good comprehension skills. He considered leisure reading to be 'dull' and

‘boring’ and during the free-reading time, usually left his book opened at the same page every day, sometimes, for as long as a week. Kasif’s attitude to reading was typical of many of the boys in the class. However, when the class teacher, Beverley, introduced practices such as book talks between the teacher and children, recommendations for good reads, reading aloud, and reading buddies, the children, including the boys, began to be more enthusiastic about reading, and Beverley observed that boys were starting to recommend reading to each other. Beverley noticed further changes in Kasif’s attitude to reading as the year progressed. From asking if he could read, he began to talk about his reading with enthusiasm and shared reading experiences he had with friends. By the year’s end, Kasif had with ease achieved a high level in reading and writing, and even though this may have happened without the project, his teacher believes that his development was significantly supported by the project. More importantly, Kasif’s attitude towards reading had changed from being indifferent to being highly positive and he had become an engaged reader. Kasif was not the only child who was influenced in that manner; other children were, too.

Layne (2009) is of the opinion that although reading is a choice, children can be impacted in such a way that they will more likely than not make the choice to read. Layne, who presently teaches children’s and young adult literature in college, taught in public elementary and junior high schools for many years. As a teacher, he introduced several strategies in his classroom to engage and inspire readers and, repeatedly, witnessed an ignition of a passion for reading in even the most disengaged readers (*ibid.*). In their report on reading, Anderson *et al.* (1985) refer to reading as a cultural phenomenon whose development is affected by “home and family circumstances, the encouragement of basic habits and attitudes in kindergarten and the early grades, and opportunities and social support for the development of effective skills and strategies in later life” (*ibid.*, p. vi).

Other studies also suggest that children’s engagement with leisure reading is influenced by factors such as the methods of teaching literature in school (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994; Cliff Hodges, 2016), the teacher’s interest in reading (Layne, 2009), choice of texts (Clark & Phythian-Sence, 2008), the reading environment (Layne, 2009), access to engaging books (Chambers, 1991), the presence of an adult who loves reading and actively encourages children’s recreational reading (Chambers, 1991; Cremin *et al.*, 2014) and the availability of social networks and affordances that support leisure reading (Campbell-Hicks, 2016; Celano & Neuman, 2001). Research on these factors will be examined in the following sections.

2.5.1 Pedagogy of Reading

Before I address how pedagogy affects children's engagement with leisure reading, I would like to state what pedagogy means to me. In this thesis, pedagogy refers to "the skilful interplay of teachers' craft knowledge and their creative responsiveness to specific classroom situations, as informed by theory and research" (Pollard *et al.*, 2014, p. 302), by which I mean the methods and practices of teaching that teachers employ as a result of the knowledge they have acquired through either theory or research, and/or their childhood or general experience. Different people may employ different pedagogic practices for RfP, hence it is necessary for me to state my own pedagogy of reading and what practices this involves. Based on findings from 'Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Readers' (TaRs) research project, Research Rich Pedagogies (2018) describes a robust RfP pedagogy as one that encompasses "four specific practices: reading aloud, informal booktalk and recommendations, and independent reading time within a highly social reading environment" (para. 1) and "is dependent upon teachers' knowledge of children's literature, their young readers and the nature of reading" (para. 1.); this description perfectly expresses my pedagogy of reading and includes the practices that I believe a healthy pedagogy of reading should involve.

Rosenblatt (1978/1994) argues that if a literature text is introduced to children with a question on what they learn from the text, the children will adopt an efferent, fact-accumulating attitude when reading the text, and may likely not derive pleasure in reading the text. Meek (1988) argues that children best learn reading through reading 'real' books that they find pleasure in reading, rather than through reading schemes. According to her, "...the reading of stories makes skilful, powerful readers who come to understand not only the meaning but also the force of texts" (*ibid.*, p. 40). Meek's argument is backed by empirical evidence. For over five years, Meek and her colleagues examined the reading of a group of adolescent non-readers. These adolescents could, at best, say a few words when prompted, and were never trusted with 'real' books. When Meek and her colleagues introduced reading through 'real' books to these adolescents and helped them to expect and find meaning in the texts, the adolescents took more pleasure in reading and read more frequently, and their reading standard was raised (Meek, Armstrong, Austerfield, Graham, & Plackett, 1983; Meek, 1988). Meek (1988) also indicates that children greatly benefit from reading picture books by skilled artists and writers.

Based on their study of the influence of children's reading on their writing, Barrs & Cork (2001) suggest that in the reading of literature in classrooms, emphasis should be placed more

on the way a story is told and on the communication of meaning, and less on the direct teaching of particular features of prose and preoccupations with plot, character and setting. In their view, “Aesthetic reading helps them (young readers/writers) to attend to their own responses and to their experience of the text as a whole, as well as to its local features” (*ibid.*, p. 43). From his study which investigated the experiences and impact of shared novel reading, Gordon (2018) found that how students experience novels during shared readings in school could have a lasting impact on their enjoyment of reading. Accordingly, he argues that the work of teachers in presenting novels has a dual purpose, to shape the students’ encounters with the novel by offering an experience of story and to shape encounters with texts to serve specific educational goals. Further, he states that “where these purposes are not in balance, and especially if the powerful experience of story is diminished at the expense of analysis, their experience of reading novels in school is at best uninspiring and at worst damaging” (*ibid.*, para. 6).

Pennac (2006) writes that when reading is first introduced to the child by the parent, it is done for the sheer pleasure that it gives; nothing is expected of the child, except to listen to, and enjoy the stories. In addition, the child often gets to select the book(s) to be read. The child therefore sees reading as a pleasurable act. However, when reading is introduced at school, it is often used as a means of teaching literary skills and, accordingly, demands are made of the child. Hence, the child may no longer associate reading with pleasure and is likely to stop reading. Pennac is of the opinion that “a novel is meant to be read *like a novel*: to satisfy our thirst for narrative” (*ibid.*, p. 119), purely for the pleasure that reading gives, a view shared by Allington (1994) who writes that “the essence of reading is getting lost in a story” (*ibid.*, p. 10). Pennac (2006) cites as an example a narration by a female student of George Perros who is quoted in Perros’ biography by Jean-Marie Gibbal. The said student narrates how by reading to her and his other students, Perros awakened in them an interest in books. It must be noted that while Pennac’s (2006) claim is not based on any empirical research, it is backed up by his personal experience as a teacher of many years.

Cremin *et al.* (2014) give an excellent example of how a teacher’s pedagogic practice can affect the students’ attitude to leisure reading. In a primary school, three disaffected 8 year old readers admitted that their teacher often read aloud to them, but all three claimed that they did not like the read aloud. Discussions revealed that their negative views were because the read aloud was followed by literacy work which focused on developing literacy skills linked to the reading and that this led the children to associate reading aloud with written work. When the involved

teacher began to read picture fiction and poetry aloud independently of literacy lessons, the children's views dramatically changed and they enjoyed the practice and asked her to read to them again and again. Going by the above, it is possible that more children would engage in RfP if they were encouraged to read purely for the enjoyment they get from reading.

2.5.2 Choice of Text

Studies on reading indicate that allowing children and young people to self-select what they read leads to a positive attitude towards reading and accordingly better engagement in, and enjoyment of leisure reading (Clark & Phythian-Sence, 2008; Maynard *et al.*, 2008). A possible reason why some children do not read may be that they do not find assigned books interesting or engaging. Gambrell (1996) who worked with classroom teachers on a series of studies designed to explore the literacy motivation of first-, third-, and fifth-grade students, lists opportunities for choice as a major factor in reading motivation for children. She reveals that when asked to comment on the books they most enjoyed reading, over 80 per cent of the children who participated in the studies mentioned that they had self-selected the books from the classroom libraries. Cremin (2007) is also of the view that choice of text is critical and perceived to be a motivator as children will more likely read books that they have selected for themselves, and books in which they can make meanings and connections. Cremin (2015) argues against a hierarchical ranking of reading materials and recommends that children should be allowed to read whatever materials they find interesting, be it comics, magazines, or poetry. She hints that doing otherwise may reduce their potential to engage in recreational reading.

Coles and Hall (2002) argue that it is important to recognize and respect the range of reading that children engage in. They also suggest that many young readers are disempowered and inhibited in their development as readers due to school definitions of literacy. Their arguments are based on the evidence from the W H Smith Children's Reading Choices Project research which employed a national questionnaire survey supplemented by a semi-structured interview to investigate the choices that 10-14 year old children make in readings done outside of school demands. To ensure that the findings could be generalized, the researchers used random sampling based on a combination of considerations such as school sizes and types, and selected pupil age ranges. Findings from the research revealed differences in the reading taste of boys and girls, and also showed that magazines and periodicals form a significant part of children's reading diet.

There are arguments on the merits of allowing children to self-select texts to read for pleasure. In their review of research evidence about the importance of choice and interests in reading, Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008) argue that choice and interest empower and positively influence children to read. However, they caution that choice could have a negative impact if it is provided haphazardly and add that “For choice to be effective and empowering, it therefore needs to [be] informed and meaningful” (*ibid.*, p. 4). While he does not argue against the self-selection of texts by children, Layne (2009; 2015) suggests that teachers should select books that cover a wide range of genres to help the students discover the kind of book that they really like. Manresa (2018) also supports the argument for schools to acknowledge personal reading preferences as this will enable schools organize multiple ways of reading which in turn will improve attitudes to reading, provide a wider range of texts and enrich the reading habits of the readers. Layne’s (2015) studies on the practice of reading aloud indicate that the selection of appropriate texts is critical for a successful reading aloud. Hence, it is possible that if children are offered engaging reading materials from a wide range of genres, more children may engage in RfP (Gambrell, 1996; Layne, 2009).

2.5.3 Reading Aloud

A 1985 research-based Commission Report on Reading identified reading aloud as “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading” (Anderson *et al.*, 1985, p. 23). Cremin *et al.* (2014) indicate that in addition to introducing children to different texts, genres and authors, “expressive reading aloud conditions a child’s brain to associate reading with pleasure, creates background knowledge and provides a reading role-model; when children are read aloud to, they are ‘enveloped’ in a risk-free learning environment” (p. 94), an environment that is devoid of both the pressure of achievement and the fear of failure. It was found in the ‘Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Readers’ project that children’s comments often showed that their enthusiasm for reading and for choosing particular books originated in their teachers’ read-aloud provision (*ibid.*).

According to Lockwood (2008), teachers can use the practice of reading aloud to develop children’s RfP. Lockwood’s claim is backed by evidence from his research which was aimed at (i) identifying primary schools and teachers who have demonstrated good practice in the area of promoting the pleasures of reading and (ii) disseminating evidence-based recommendations to other schools who want to improve their practice. His survey of teachers, children and parents carried out over a two-year period indicates that teachers’ reading aloud helps to

promote reading for enjoyment in students and is a feature of successful RfP classrooms. Layne's (2015) extensive research on the practice of read-aloud also suggests that when teachers read aloud to their students, they foster a love of reading in the students, and the students are likely to get hooked on books as they associate reading with pleasure. For example, in Layne (2015), there are accounts by teachers whose students independently bought and completely read the books that the teacher had begun reading to the class during the read-aloud time.

Pennac (2006) suggests that reading aloud whets the appetite of children for reading and should be continued throughout all the grades, a notion supported by Layne (2009; 2015) and Cliff Hodges (2011). Cliff Hodges (2011) gives accounts of several adults in one of her studies who vividly recall their childhood experiences of being read to and highlights that the practice engages both the reader and listener and brings a connection between them. For instance, a grandmother remembers her own father reading to her at bedtime, and a father told his son how he read to him when he was young and later enjoyed listening to his son read, providing evidence of the impact the reading aloud had on them. Cliff Hodges is of the view that reading aloud should be continued across all secondary classes as it may support proficient readers when they encounter challenging texts and may also help those who did not have the experience of being read to at home.

Layne (2009) argues that besides the commonly cited benefits such as increased reading comprehension, improved listening skills, and a broadening of vocabulary, reading aloud to children is fun for the reader and the children, and develops lifelong readers. In support of reading aloud, Chambers (1993) points out that the time it takes to read the text is the same for everyone, and that the reading does not depend on the individual child's determination to read the book, both of which are advantages especially for slow or reluctant readers. In spite of the possible benefits, reading aloud also has the potential to bore children and take away the pleasure from reading if the book seems never-ending and requires a memory for descriptive detail rather than for plot-filled action (Chambers, 1993).

2.5.4 Access to Engaging Books

Another factor revealed to play a critical role in RfP is the access to engaging and suitably challenging texts (Chambers, 1991; Clark and Douglas, 2011). Much has been said about the choice of texts, but it is equally important that suitable texts are available and accessible to the

children when they want to read them. Clark & Douglas (2011) demonstrate the relevance of access to resources. In an online survey of 17,089 pupils from 112 schools in the UK, a strong positive relationship was found between a child's access to resources and literacy attainment. Participants who had books of their own were twice as likely to report daily reading while those who had no books were likely to say they never read. In addition, 80 per cent of those who read above the expected level for their age owned books.

Research evidence indicates that the provision of a print-rich environment where there is easy access to many suitable texts is a common thread in the schools that successfully promote reading (Lockwood, 2008). The Running Start (RS) programme, developed by the US nonprofit literacy organization, Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), to support the literacy development of first graders recognizes that access to books is a key factor in reading development and makes the availability of books a major component of its programme (Gambrell & Morrow, 1995). Teachers in the programme are provided with funds to purchase high-quality fiction and informational books for their classrooms so that suitable books are available for children to read or have someone read to them. In a quasi-experimental study conducted with matched schools to assess the motivational effects of the RS program, teachers in the RS programme reported that over 80 per cent of the children in their classrooms were motivated to read, while teachers in the control classrooms reported that only 30 per cent of their students were so motivated (*ibid.*). Clark & Phythian-Sence (2008) emphasize that to stimulate the interest of children and young people, it is important to make available a wide range of reading materials that are not books, including magazines, newspapers, websites and emails.

Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) study of literacy in the lives of young men demonstrates the importance of engaging materials. The study's participants were 49 boys of different ethnicities who attended four different schools: an urban high school, a sub-urban high school, a rural middle and high school, and a private all-boys' middle school and high school. About a third of the participants were considered to be high achievers, one-third average achievers and one-third low achievers. Data for the study were gathered through four methods: firstly, the boys were asked to rank a series of activities in the order in which they liked the activities and interviewed about their rankings; secondly, the boys were given different profiles of males and their literate activities and interviewed about their opinions of the profiled males; thirdly, they were asked to keep a three month log of their literacy activities in school and at home and

interviewed about this literacy log every four to six weeks; and fourthly, using think-aloud protocol techniques to record what they thought, felt and did, the participants were asked to respond to four stories from features of texts they seemed to enjoy. One of the findings from this study is that participants expected to be engaged and absorbed by a story in the first few paragraphs, and where this did not happen, they gave up reading the book.

Based on the above studies, some children may be motivated to read more if their class libraries, school libraries and neighbourhood libraries were stocked with appropriate texts and reading materials they have interest in, and these materials were easily accessible to them.

2.5.5 An Enabling Adult

Before I discuss research findings on the importance of an enabling adult in children's reading engagement, I would like to describe what an enabling adult might look like. Based on Chambers (1991) and Layne (2009; 2015), the key features of an enabling adult are that s/he: loves books and recreational reading, has knowledge of children's literature, discusses books regularly with the child in a manner the child finds engaging and appealing, knows the child's reading tastes, suggests suitable and engaging books to the child, and reads aloud to the child. Among other things, Cremin *et al.* (2014) highlight the need for teachers to (i) be familiar with a diverse range of writers to enable them to make informed recommendations to children with different needs and interests and (2) find out more about the home reading practices of the children and build on this by possibly seeking more parental and community involvement in the children's reading practices through having shared sessions with parents and taking children on visits to the local library. Although an enabling adult does not have to be a teacher and could be a parent or some other adult in a child's life, these recommendations by Cremin *et al.* (2014) give additional features of an enabling adult.

Studies on successful literacy achievement often appear to feature either a teacher or a parent (Klauda, 2009; Westbrook, 2013; Cremin *et al.*, 2014). Chambers (1991) places an enabling adult at the centre of the reading circle, a circle he draws to show the sequence of activities in reading. Commenting on the importance of an enabling adult, Chambers asserts that "All other obstacles in the way of learner readers can be overcome if they have the help and example of a trusted, experienced adult reader" (*ibid.*, p. 15). Chambers is of the view that reading is both an art and craft, and therefore learner readers need knowledgeable adults from whose experiences they can learn. Cremin *et al.* (2014) provide evidence that children's reading

engagements are boosted when there is an enabling adult. The need for an enabling adult is strongly supported by Klauda (2009) and Cliff Hodges (2010b).

For example, Klauda's (2009) review of empirical studies on the role of parents in adolescents' reading indicates that parents' support of reading plays a role in developing and sustaining reading motivation in adolescent children. In a study she carried out earlier reported in Klauda (2009), Klauda examined the relative contributions of perceived support for recreational reading from parents and friends to five dimensions of reading motivation and four aspects of recreational reading frequency in fourth and fifth graders. The participants, 302 pupils who attended rural schools in the USA were asked to separately rate their mother, father, and a friend on 11 reading-supportive behaviours that had been previously studied by others. It was found that both parent and friend support contributed to the motivations of having knowledge goals, specific reading interest and the desire to be challenged in reading. Parent support also contributed to the motivations of recognition and autonomy, while friend support contributed to the participants' motivations for recreational reading of information books and websites.

Cliff Hodges's (2010b) study of 12-13 year old habitual readers also supports the importance of an enabling adult. The study which involved different research methods aimed to throw more light on the complexity of the reading process and add to our understanding of adolescent readers. It focused on the sociocultural and spatial aspects of the participants' reading and explored how their encounters with other readers and different reading practices affected their readership. Data from the interviews with participants and the collages of the participants' reading histories reveal that adults within their families either read to them mostly when they were very young, and/or provided them with reading materials, further supporting the argument that an enabling adult could make a positive difference in a child's reading habits.

2.5.6 The Reading Environment

In addition to an enabling adult, a suitable reading environment must be created for children. According to Chambers (1991), "...every reader knows that *where* we read affects *how* we read: with what pleasure and willingness and concentration" (*ibid.*, p. 7). By '*where* we read', Chambers refers to the reading environment which he describes as being made up of the place (setting), the availability of books, time available for reading, interruptions the reader may experience, the mood of the reader, and the attitude of the reader. The reading environment greatly influences the reader's experience of reading; therefore, to enable children to fully

engage with and take pleasure from reading, it is important to create the right reading environment. Although he argues that the set (the mix of mental and emotional attitudes) is a more powerful influence than the setting, Chambers advises this: “Settle down somewhere comfortable, and we can sometimes read happily for a long time” (*ibid.*, p. 17).

Chambers’ (1991) argument on the importance of the right setting is supported by Layne (2009) who advocates for the building of a Reading Lounge in every school. As a teacher, Layne built a reading corner with books and comfortable seats in his classroom and discovered that his students were always eager to get out of their desks and be in the reading corner. He argues, “Over the years of my own classroom experience, I came to understand just how powerful it can be for students to have a comfortable space to be with text” (*ibid.*, pp. 102-103). In addition to providing students with a comfortable environment to read, creating a dedicated reading corner (or lounge) sends the message to students that reading is important (Miller, 2009).

Cremin *et al.* (2014) provide further evidence of the importance of the reading environment through some children’s drawings of readers and the children’s comments. Natalie drew a person “reading in the park because it’s quiet and there’s nobody around” (p. 141). Charlie drew an imaginary boy, Fred, who is reading a football comic in the library. Carl drew a 14 year old boy, Bob, reading at the New York City Reading Club on a Wednesday night; Bob is alone because people visit there on different days so everyone can read in peace. Samin drew people sprawled on floor cushions in her home reading different materials. These examples show the significance of the reading environment to the children.

2.5.7 Social Networks and Affordances that Support Leisure Reading

Research indicates that social networks and affordances that support children’s leisure reading such as libraries and literary programmes can play a major role in nurturing children’s love for reading and their development of a reading culture (Campbell-Hicks, 2016; Celano & Neuman, 2001). In a survey of public libraries in Pennsylvania, USA, Celano & Neuman (2001) examined how children’s preschool and summer reading programmes contribute to their reading skills. The study used the quantitative and qualitative methods of survey, interviews, and observation. To understand the scope and nature of summer readings and pre-school library programmes, a large-scale survey was designed and sent to 227 libraries, a third of the libraries in Pennsylvania. The libraries were randomly chosen and included urban, suburban and rural library outlets. There were 204 responses. For a better understanding of the impact that

preschool and summer reading programmes have on children's developing literacy skills, on-site visits were made to 25 libraries in different parts of the state. During the visits, the researchers observed the programmes and interviewed librarians and parents of the children that participated in the programmes. Findings from this study indicate that the programmes encouraged children to enjoy reading, spend increased time with books, read more, and that the programmes also encouraged parents to become more involved in children's reading.

Many libraries offer various literary activities including author readings, discussion groups, and summer reading groups which nurture children's interests in reading and in books, and provide them with opportunities to spend more time reading (Krolak, 2005). Evidence from Adkins & Brendler's (2015) review of the PISA reading results suggests libraries can ensure that students are motivated to read by providing a variety of materials, a supportive environment for literacy and reading conversations, and by encouraging student autonomy in making their reading choices. By providing children of all backgrounds with access to a print-rich environment, high-quality reading materials and literary experiences, public libraries help to close the reading gap that exists between children from different backgrounds (Celano & Neuman, 2001). It is therefore likely that if children get to regularly visit a library and participate in the programmes offered in the library, they will develop more interest in RfP.

Besides the community library, the school library can serve a crucial role in encouraging children to read for pleasure (Loh, Ellis, Paculdar, & Wan, 2017). In a case study of a secondary school in Singapore, Loh *et al.* (2017) used both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand how one school, out of a larger dataset of six schools, transformed its school library into a central place for reading within the school and built a successful reading culture through the library. Data were collected through a school-wide reading survey, interviews with the principal, teachers and students, library observations, timed counts of library users, narratives and time-lapse photographs of library space. The data provide evidence that there are strategies, programmes and designs that work to encourage reading, some of which are curating the book selection for readers, making books visible, creating programmes to excite readers, designing spaces for reading, and creating an ecology for reading. An ecology for reading refers to people in an environment having various multiple interactions that have reading at the centre or the focus of the interactions. Loh *et al.* (2017) demonstrate that school libraries have the potential to shape children's attitude towards reading and help them to build a reading culture.

Francois (2015) provides evidence that reading motivation is as much intrinsic as it is contextual, and that having networks and affordances that support leisure reading can motivate young adolescents to read. In a study on literacy which was carried out in a New York City public school where Francois taught for a year, data were obtained by interviewing students and teachers, observing school spaces for what reading looked like in that context, and administering a survey on students' reading motivation and a standardized reading assessment. The researcher interviewed 23 students who varied in grade level, academic status, ethnicity, and gender to understand more about their motivation to read and about the school's culture of reading. The students highlighted that their motivation to read was greatly influenced by the constant opportunities to talk about books throughout the school, the book talks with teachers, the principal's book club, the time set aside for independent reading and seeing the teachers and everyone around them reading. Findings from the study led the researcher to argue that "a school can shape students' motivation to read in the classroom in ways that have positive effects on their reading identity, efficacy in reading, and ability to read well" (*ibid.*, p. 68).

2.6 Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An Overview

Although not much research has been done on RfP in Nigeria, there are assertions that Nigerian students, and indeed, Nigerians generally, have poor reading habits, and rarely engage in RfP. In this section, I will examine literature on reading in Nigeria.

2.6.1 Perceptions and Observations

It is widely reported that reading is on the decline in Nigeria, and that Nigerian children and youths do not have a reading culture (Dapam, 2014; Ilogho & Michael-Onuoha, 2015; Nwaubani, 2015; Makinde, 2018). By this, what is meant is that Nigerian children and youths do not engage in RfP as it is also stated that the children and youths only read when it is required, for example, to do homework or write examinations. The phrase 'RfP' is not commonly used in Nigeria, but 'reading culture' is. Many parents have expressed concerns about what they perceive to be their children's poor attitude to reading (Okebukola, 2005). The absence of a reading culture is often cited as being responsible for low student achievement in terminal examinations in Nigeria (Ihejirika, 2014; Makinde, 2018; Tunde-Awe, 2014). However, there appears to be no record of a study, whether recently or long ago, of the extent to which children in Nigeria read.

Based on the assertions that Nigerian children do not read habitually, there have been various efforts aimed at promoting RfP in Nigeria. For example, in 1980, the National Implementation Committee on Readership Promotion Campaign by the National Library Board was inaugurated with the aim of promoting a reading culture in Nigerians (Nweke, 1987). However, the campaign was not sustained, nor does it appear to have been successful (*ibid.*). In recent years, there have been concerted efforts from different quarters aimed at encouraging Nigerian children and youths to become habitual readers. In 2005, Ms. Koko Kalango founded the Rainbow Book Club (not to be confused with Krown Book Club (KBC)) with the objective of getting people to read.

In 2011, then President Goodluck Jonathan launched the Bring Back the Book initiative to get Nigerians reading ‘again’. Unfortunately, the initiative appears to have died long before the exit of President Jonathan’s government in May 2015. The website of the initiative is no longer in existence, and the last post on its only social media presence, the Bring Back the Book Facebook page, was made in October 2012. The unsustainability of the Bring Back the Book initiative may not be totally unconnected with the issue of getting funding from the government (Igwe & Uzuegbu, 2013). Most recently, different state libraries have organized readership promotion campaigns to promote a reading culture among school children in Nigeria (Agency Reporter, 2017; Adekunle, 2017; Makinde, 2018).

Whilst the assertion that Nigerian children do not read for pleasure may be true, it is not backed by compelling evidence. Nweke’s (1987) claims that Nigerians do not read are based on a survey carried out on a cross section of Nigerians in Ibadan, Oyo State. The survey revealed that Nigerians in Ibadan were slow in embracing the Nigerian government’s readership campaign. Even though the findings of the survey cannot be totally discountenanced, conclusions on the reading habits of Nigerians cannot be made solely on the findings of the survey as some habitual readers may not have seen the need to openly embrace the campaign. Ihejirika’s (2014) conclusion that Nigerian students have a poor reading culture is not drawn from any research, but from his experience as a teacher in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Similarly, the assertion of a declining reading culture in Nigeria (Dapam, 2014) has no empirical backing. Further, it cannot be said that reading is on the decline since there is no record of a previous assessment of the reading habits of Nigerians against which new assessments can be compared. For better understanding of reading and the reading culture in Nigeria, it is important to look to what empirical studies have been carried out in Nigeria on the subject.

2.6.2 Facts and Findings

Ifedili's (2009) study of second year students in 10 different universities reports a high decline in the reading culture of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study which aimed at assessing the reading culture of students in tertiary institutions had as participants 8500 students and 850 lecturers, all of whom were randomly selected. Data were collected through the use of a structured questionnaire. Data analysis revealed that most participants think that the habit of reading was on the decline; however, there was a significant difference in the students' reading culture as perceived by the lecturers and the students. When randomly interviewed, the lecturers complained that the students hated reading. But the possibility exists that the complaints may be based on the lecturers' perceptions which may have arisen from the students' performance in the subjects the involved lecturers taught, as findings from Chong (2016) have shown that it is possible that a student who is not doing much academic or required reading may be doing much personal choice reading, and vice versa.

Wilhelm (2008) indicates that it is possible for teachers to miss identifying readers as they may not be looking below the surface of engagement with school literacy. When pushed by his dissertation committee to select a slate of informants that was more gender-balanced as his initial selection had mostly girls, Wilhelm eventually chose a boy, Ron, as a case study informant. He found out that contrary to his initial opinion that all the expert readers in his class were girls, Ron was the best and most engaged reader in his class that year. Moje (2000) also establishes that various young people groups have powerful literacy practices outside school that are unrecognized or undervalued in school. Similarly, findings from Cremin *et al.* (2014) reveal that some of the children teachers identified as 'disaffected and reluctant' readers with mostly negative attitude to reading did of their own volition read at home. Therefore, the disparity in the responses of the students and the lecturers in Ifedili (2009) calls for further investigation.

Findings in a study that appraised the impact of students' reading culture on their learning of oral English support the notion that Nigerian students have a poor reading culture (Oribabor, 2014). The participants of the study were 30 students and an unspecified number of teachers, all from three secondary schools in Osun state of Nigeria. Questionnaires were administered to the students while guided interviews and discussions were held with the teachers. On the general reading habit of secondary school students, the students stated that they read only when it was necessary.

In a mini descriptive survey carried out to ascertain the opinions of some Nigerians on reading culture, only 20 per cent of the Nigerian adults surveyed read at least one book every month (Olasehinde, Akanmode, Alaiyemola, & Babatunde, 2015). The participants of the study were 100 staff and 200 students of Landmark University, Kwara State, who were selected through the stratified random sampling technique. Data were generated using questionnaires that had closed and open-ended questions. From the data analysis, most of the respondents agreed that reading was beneficial, 60 per cent considered their reading habits to be good, 55 per cent saw reading as a culture or habit, but only 40 per cent admitted that they liked reading. The disparity in the participants' responses (60 per cent of the participants considered themselves to have good reading habits but only 20 per cent admitted reading at least a book a month) raises questions about why and what they read and suggests that most of the reading may be for school purposes, and therefore not necessarily constitute RfP as Chong (2016) highlights. It is also possible that the survey may have taken place during the examination period or at some other busy period during which the participants may have had less time for leisure reading.

In contrast to the above studies which suggest that Nigerians do not read habitually, Haliru Abdulkarim, Mohammed, and Dangani (2015) suggest that the claims that Nigerian students have a poor reading culture may be inaccurate. In a study that aimed to find out the frequency of reading among secondary school students in Kaduna, findings revealed that 52 per cent of the students read for a minimum of 1-2 hours daily, and 31 per cent read for 2-3 hours daily (*ibid.*). The instrument for gathering data was a questionnaire, and the participants were 500 students who were randomly selected from 10 secondary schools. 54 per cent of the respondents stated that they mostly read textbooks while 20 per cent claimed that they mostly read novels and other fiction.

Haliru *et al.* (2015) are supported by Aramide (2015) who reports that secondary school students demonstrate a high interest in reading. Using a survey design, Aramide (2015) investigated the effect of parental background factors on the reading habits of secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. Using multi-stage sampling technique, 595 senior secondary school students were selected for the study. Questionnaires were distributed to the students, most of whom returned the questionnaires with useful responses. Although the data analysis indicated a good reading culture, it also revealed that most of the students read mainly for the purposes of passing examinations and personal development. Findings from both Haliru *et al.* (2015) and Aramide (2015) contradict Oyewusi & Ayanlola's (2014) findings that most students preferred to read for pleasure than for academic purposes.

According to Nwokocha (2014), boarding students in Nigeria read regularly and spend more time reading than day students. However, the study also reports that this was so because a scheduled time was fixed for reading in the school. There are indications that the students mostly read textbooks and materials that were relevant to their academic studies. In a study that sought to investigate the influence of electronic media on the reading habits of primary and secondary school students, Igbokwe, Obidike, and Ezeji (2012) report that a majority of the respondents indicated that they read regularly, and were not negatively influenced by electronic media, although they did not report being positively influenced by electronic media either. In the study, questionnaires were administered to 81 students, and four teachers were interviewed. Unlike the students, the teachers were of the opinion that the students' reading habits had dwindled, though the possibility exists that the teachers and students may have different perceptions of what counts as reading as shown by findings from Chong (2016) mentioned on page 38. Whilst they do not dispute the students' responses on the influence of electronic media on their reading habits, the researchers suggest that some of the respondents may have lied about their reading habits out of fear that the results of the study may get to their parents who would frown at their poor reading habits.

Even though there is not sufficient evidence to support the assertion that Nigerian children are not habitual readers, suggestions have been made about the factors that are responsible for the 'decline in reading' and 'absence of a reading culture'. These factors include minimal experience of print immersion, absence of collaboration between the home and school in the provision of reading empowerment for the child, a hostile examination system, and the imposition of an ill-motivated and ill-equipped reading teacher (Onukaogu, 2001). Other reasons given for the 'poor reading culture' are the lack of intrinsic motivation for reading, lack of choice of what to read, negative attitude to reading, and competing activities (Ilogho & Michael-Onuoha, 2015), the escalating level of poverty, the growing culture of TV viewership, unidentified dyslexics (Okebukola, 2005), shortage of reading materials, dearth of libraries, internet usage, and lack of encouragement from parents (Olasehinde *et al.*, 2015). Olasehinde *et al.*'s (2015) suggestion that the internet impacts negatively on the reading habits of Nigerians contradicts the suggestion earlier given by Griswold, McDonnell and McDonnell (2007) which indicates that although internet usage competes with time spent watching TV, hanging out with friends and making phone calls, it has either no impact or a slightly positive one on reading. Griswold *et al.* report that "Both net-savvy youth and the adult 'reading class' protect reading practices through spatial and temporal separation, time management, and functional

differentiation” (p. 37), thereby suggesting that contrary to the general perception, Nigerian youths may be reading.

There are suggestions on the strategies that could be used to combat the ‘poor reading culture’ of Nigerian children, some of which are: libraries should be established and well-stocked with relevant materials (Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun, & Ogundipe, 2011; Ogunrombi, 2000), and teachers and school heads should give attention to reading (Ilogho & Michael-Onuoha, 2015; Kolawole, 2009; Okebukola, 2005). Ossai-onah (2012) suggests that teachers and teacher librarians should devise strategies such as story hour, book talks and exhibitions to promote a reading culture among students. This recommendation is based on a study carried out in 10 secondary schools in Imo State. The study aimed to find out the challenges of promoting reading culture through story hour, book talks and exhibitions. The participants of the study were 11 teacher librarians/library assistants. Using the instrumentation of questionnaires, data were generated on the frequency of use, and impact of story hour, book talks and exhibitions and other strategies to promote reading. Most of the participants indicated that story hour, book talks and exhibitions helped in promoting a reading culture but were not regularly used in their schools. Studies also suggest that students’ interests should be reflected in the reading curriculum (Okebukola, 2000) and that students’ motivation to read may be developed by having older students read to younger ones (Okebukola, 2007).

Most studies on the reading habits and reading culture of Nigerian students seem to place emphasis on the positive relationship between a reading culture and academic performance. Also, it does appear that for many people, especially parents, the lament that Nigerian students do not have a good reading culture arises not necessarily because they believe in the benefits of a good reading culture, but because they desire to see the student(s) excel academically and believe that reading is the key to this (Okebukola, 2005; Egong 2014).

Whilst it is possible that a good reading culture may lead to academic achievement, research discussed in Section 2.5 suggests that children should be encouraged to read primarily for the pleasure that they get from reading. When they discover the joy in reading, they will easily develop a reading culture. As Cremin (2015) puts it,

...we cannot require children to read with or for pleasure, nor can we oblige them to engage positively in words and worlds. *We can, however, invite and entice children to find enjoyment in reading, share our own pleasures (and dissatisfactions) as readers, and work to build communities of engaged readers”* (italics mine) (para. 1).

2.7 Rationale for the Study

Overall, the existing literature suggests that RfP, especially reading literature, may have many benefits including the potential to raise student achievement in English language arts, maths, science and other subjects. Findings also indicate that in the right setting, children, including those who consider themselves to be non-readers, could be helped to become habitual readers who read for pleasure. The review of literature on reading in Nigeria revealed that many of the studies carried out in Nigeria claim that there is either a decline in reading in Nigeria or that Nigerian children do not read for pleasure. Although reasons have been given for the ‘poor reading culture’ of Nigerian children, and solutions have been proffered, I have not found any evidence to support the claim that Nigerian children are not habitual readers. The few studies that aimed to assess the reading habits of Nigerians had participants that were in secondary and tertiary institutions, and there is no evidence of a study of the reading habits of children in primary school.

The elementary school years are critical in shaping consequent reading motivation (Allington, 1994; Gambrell, 1996) as the foundation for an enduring reading culture is laid in the early years, and children tend to read less as they get older (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Reviews of research on children’s engagement with RfP suggest that “...if children do not enjoy reading when they are young, then they are unlikely to do so when they get older” (*ibid.*, p. 15). Hence, a key strategy to helping children to become life-long readers is getting them hooked on reading very early in life. Accordingly, there is need to explore the reading habits of children of primary age in Nigeria and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP.

This study therefore aims to extend the research on reading in Nigeria by doing an in-depth case study of the reading habits of a small group of 9–12 year olds in Nigeria. I use the phrase ‘in-depth’ because the study is comprehensive and thorough, employing four different methods: visual (collages), questionnaire, observation and interviews. Working with four methods allowed me to explore in great detail the reading habits of the children. For instance, the collages and questionnaires revealed the extent to which they read, and the interviews gave me greater insights into why they read. I have written more about these methods and their benefits and limitations in Section 3.4. Whilst the findings of the study cannot be generalized as the participants will be drawn from only one portion of the children population in Nigeria, knowledge of the extent to which the 9–12 year olds at KBC read will give an indication of the extent to which Nigerian children who are habitual and committed readers read. By knowing

the extent to which the habitual child readers in Nigeria read, we can better predict the extent to which less-committed readers would possibly be reading, as the habitual readers are bound to read more than the non-habitual readers.

This review of the literature on RfP indicates that factors such as an enabling environment, choice and availability of text, and reading aloud could greatly impact on children's engagement with RfP. This study aims to also investigate the existence of these factors and their influence in the lives of the 9–12 year olds at KBC. Given the fact that the participants of the study are children in a book club in a city in Nigeria who have what could be considered to be the best support system for leisure reading in the country, an assessment of the social networks and affordances available to these children will indicate how much support for leisure reading is available to children in similar groups in Nigeria, and also indicate what reading support structures are likely to exist for the Nigerian children who do not have the social networks and affordances that the children at KBC have.

Knowledge of how, what, when and why the children at KBC read, and the factors that affect their leisure reading may guide parents and schools on what steps to take in order to build and/or nurture a love for leisure reading in the children. As stated in an earlier section, I also would like to see if the factors identified as affecting RfP as indicated in studies done in the US and the UK are relevant in Nigeria, and what cultural factors specific to Nigeria affect children's RfP in Nigeria.

2.8 The Research Questions

On the basis of the literature I have reviewed so far, the research questions guiding this study are:

1. To what extent do 9–12 year olds motivated to attend the Krown Book Club (KBC) (the name has been changed to ensure anonymity) in Nigeria, engage in RfP?
2. How, what, when and why do the 9–12 year olds in KBC read when they read, both within the book club and beyond the book club?
3. What factors affect their engagement with RfP and what social networks and affordances exist to nurture and support their leisure reading?

In the next section, I will review methodological literature as I continue with my thesis.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I made known the context of this research, and in Chapter 2, I reviewed literature relevant to the study. In Section 2.8, I stated the questions that will guide this study. As previously discussed, the purpose of the study is to explore RfP among a specific group of 9–12 year olds in a book club in Nigeria with the aim of understanding how, what, when and why they chose to read, and the factors that affected their engagement with RfP. This chapter presents a rationale for the methodological approach to the study, explicates how I executed the project and the strategies and methods I adopted, and explains how I analysed the data. Even though I had a schedule that detailed the timing for field research and data analysis, I remained flexible and adaptable, as suggested by Stake (1995) and Denscombe (2017).

The research design I adopted is partly based on Crotty's (1998) model which comprises four research elements, namely, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. As suggested by Crotty, I describe each research step, starting with the epistemology and theoretical perspective. I then examine my chosen methodology and methods, their strengths and limitations, the rationale for the chosen methods, and the means by which the data are analysed. I also discuss the pilot studies I carried out, the profiles of participants of the main study, the means by which the data are analysed, the steps taken to address the validity and reliability of my findings, as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Epistemology: Constructionism

Crotty (1998) defines epistemology as “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology” (p. 3), or simply put, “*how we know what we know*” (author's italics) (p. 8). In place of epistemology, Creswell (2009) uses the term ‘worldview’ which he defines as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (p. 6). The researcher's approach to research is shaped by his or her worldview or epistemological stance. Crotty (1998) identifies three main epistemological stances by which meaning can be construed, namely objectivism, subjectivism, and constructionism. Objectivism holds that meaning already exists, and simply waits to be discovered, while subjectivism is the view that the meaning of an object is imposed on the object by the subject or the researcher (*ibid.*). Constructionism proposes that the meaning of a thing does not exist on its own, waiting to be discovered, but is constructed by people (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Stake, 1995). Adhering

to the constructionist view, “different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon” (Crotty, 1998, p. 9).

The epistemological stance that underpins this research is constructionism which holds that “*all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context*” (author’s italics) (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Accordingly, the meaning of a text emerges from the student’s interaction with the text, and different students may construe different meanings from the same text. This view aligns with Rosenblatt’s (1978/1994) notion of reading as a transaction between the reader and the text, already discussed in the literature review.

A constructionist approach to research requires an abandonment of conventional meanings given to an object, and an openness to the research’s potential for new or richer meanings (Crotty, 1998). Given its worldview and research approach, constructionism links well with my study which explores RfP among 9–12 year olds in a book club in Nigeria. A constructionist view will guide me to construe the meaning of these particular children’s reading, motivations for reading, and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP from the findings of my study rather than from pre-conceived notions.

3.2 Theoretical Perspective: Interpretivism

The second element in Crotty’s (1998) model is the theoretical perspective, which is the philosophical stance that guides the researcher in choosing a methodology, framing research questions, conducting the research and analyzing the data gathered. The theoretical perspective provides a context for the research process and the assumptions the researcher brings to the task (Crotty, 1998). Some common theoretical perspectives include positivism, interpretivism, and critical inquiry (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Positivism follows the methods of the natural sciences and is based on detached observation. It is underpinned by the epistemological view of objectivism, and social reality is “treated in a similar way to physical reality as something that exists independently ‘out there’ with properties that can be studied scientifically” (Denscombe, 2017, p. 8). Positivism usually focuses on facts and figures related to the causes and consequences of the phenomena in the social world (*ibid.*). Critical inquiry challenges the status quo and seeks to bring about change; its goals are a just society, freedom and equity (Crotty, 1998). As I aim to *construe meaning* of the children’s reading through an

in-depth study of their reading habits, none of the above theoretical perspectives is ideal for this study.

In contrast, interpretivism is the research approach that “*looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world*” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). It regards the social world as “a nuanced, multi-layered phenomenon whose complexity is best understood through a process of interpretation” (Denscombe, 2017, p. 8). Accordingly, it usually focuses on meaning and may use different methods so that different aspects of the issue may be reflected (Dudovskiy, 2018). The researcher’s role is not only to learn about what is investigated, but to interpret elements of the study or the world investigated, and “the objectivity and reliability of those interpretations reside in the distance she maintains between herself and the focus of her investigation” (Walker & Dewar, 2000, p. 714). The researcher interacts with the social world in a naturalistic way that tries to understand things as they are without intervening or changing things and employs different methods such as interviews and observations to gain understanding (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998). In examining the social world and trying to understand it, the researcher tries to make sense of human subjectivity or the subjectivities of a group, and exercises judgement to make meaning; however, s/he must strive to ensure this is done without bias of any kind as any bias would weaken the results (Counsell, 2017).

Based on the exploratory nature of my research and the constructionist epistemological stance I adopted, I chose to view it from an interpretivist theoretical perspective. This perspective supports Rosenblatt’s transactional mode of reading and encourages the researcher to recognize data as text to be interpreted. Thus, individual participants interpreted their engagement with RfP and the factors surrounding it based on their personal experiences, and my understanding of the participant’s engagement with RfP came from my interactions with them.

3.3 Methodology: Case Study

Crotty (1998) defines methodology as “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (p. 3). The choice of strategy is dependent on which strategy will be most useful and appropriate for the study at hand. A constructionist epistemological stance and an interpretivist theoretical perspective require me to employ a research methodology that provides me with the means to explore in great depth and have a deep understanding of the children’s reading experiences. For this reason, the methodology I have chosen is case study.

Although the research design I have adopted is Crotty's (1998), I slightly depart from him on the issue of case study being a method rather than a methodology especially since he has given no definition of what he considers case study to be and has not stated why he casts it as a method in his table. I argue that undertaking a case study is a form of methodology, resting my claim on the evidence given by case study researchers such as Simons (1996), Stake (1995), Denscombe (2017) and Yin (2014) who consider case study to be a research strategy or methodology rather than a method, and have stated their views of what a case study is, as well as when it is appropriate to use it. According to Simons (2009),

Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development... (p. 21).

The basic idea is that one case, or maybe a small number of cases, will be studied in detail using whatever methods seem appropriate, with the objective of developing as full an understanding of the case(s) as possible. 'Real life' context here means that the study is carried out in a naturalistic way; the researcher examines things as they are ideally without trying to change or manipulate things or intervene in some way. The strengths of case study include its exploration of contesting viewpoints, its usefulness for exploring and understanding the process and dynamics of change, its flexibility (it is neither time-dependent, nor constrained by method), and its potential to engage the participants in the research process such that meaning is co-constructed by the researcher and the participants (Simons, 1996; 2009).

Case study research seeks to understand the complex relationship between factors that operate within a particular social sector (Denscombe, 2017; Simons, 1996). It studies things in detail and is holistic and interpretative in context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Case study approach is effective for both theory-building and theory-testing (Denscombe, 2017). Through case studies, policy makers, practitioners and programme developers can get multiple perspectives and have increased understanding of an issue or programme, and thereby make informed judgements (Simons, 1996). Stake (1995) distinguishes the types of case studies as intrinsic (studied for the researcher's interest in the case), instrumental (studied to explore an issue or

gain understanding), and collective (several cases are studied for a collective understanding of an issue).

Yin (2014) indicates that case studies are the preferred strategy for studies that have ‘how’ or ‘why’ research questions, and that case studies may be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory, depending on the research purposes. Considering that my research questions fall into the ‘how’ and ‘why’ categories, and my study explores and seeks to generate an in-depth understanding of RfP for a particular group of young people in Nigeria, case study is the appropriate strategy for my study. Denscombe’s (2017) argument that a case study offers the opportunity to explain why certain outcomes may happen makes case study methodology even more apt as I am also interested in understanding the reason(s) behind children’s engagement or lack of engagement with RfP.

Case study is largely criticized in relation to the fact that its findings cannot be generalized (Simons, 1996; Yin, 2014). However, Bassey (1999) points out that the case study is not chosen as a ‘typical’ example, but because of its interest to the researcher, and Yin (2014) indicates that the goal of case study is to expand and generalize theories rather than extrapolate probabilities. My study aims to shed light on RfP in Nigeria, rather than produce generalizable findings. As suggested by Denscombe (2017), I will demonstrate the extent to which my case is similar to or differs from others of its type in the concluding chapter. There are also concerns that case study is not rigorous enough (Yin, 2014). Mindful of this, I followed systematic procedures and did not allow equivocal evidence to influence the direction of my findings and conclusions. Concerns about the intervention in the lives of the participants, the subjectivity of the researcher, and the validity of the data (Simons, 2009) will be addressed in the sections on ethical considerations and validity.

It may be argued that I conducted ethnography rather than case study as there are similarities between case study and ethnography. Hammersley (2006) acknowledges the debate on what ethnography really means and argues that because ethnography does not form part of a clear taxonomy, “it is used in different ways on different occasions to mark off work of one kind from that of another” (*ibid.*, p. 3). Parker-Jenkins (2018) indicates that sometimes when people claim to be conducting ethnography, they are actually undertaking a case study using ethnographic techniques. I will therefore briefly look at what ethnography is, and argue why my study is not ethnography, but case study drawing on ethnographic techniques.

Spradley (1980/2016) defines ethnography as “the work of describing a culture” (p. 3) with the aim of understanding “another way of life from the native point of view” (*ibid.*). Researchers step out of their cultural background and view another culture from the participants’ point of view. According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1983/2007), ethnography:

usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for *an extended period of time* (italics mine), watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry (p. 3).

Parker-Jenkins (2018) defines ethnography as “a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group” (p. 19). According to Brown & Dowling (1998), an ethnographic approach “involves the immersion of the researcher in the practices in the empirical setting and sustained interaction with participants” (p. 43) employing detailed observation as the predominant means of collecting data.

As evidenced by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983/2007) and Brown & Dowling (1998), conducting ethnography entails the researcher spending a long period living within the cultural group s/he is studying, and sometimes involves learning the local language of the group, all in a bid to fully understand the culture of the group. Parker-Jenkins (2018) argues that although there are shared research methods between ethnography and case study, the two strategies differ in the time spent in the field, and “the extent to which the researcher is immersed in the context and/or data” (p. 23). Even though my research methods included observation and interview which are methods shared by ethnographic studies, it was limited in terms of time in the field and engagement with data as I did not spend an extended period in the field and did not participate in the daily lives of the participants. Additionally, I focused more on the children’s engagement with RfP rather than on the entire culture of the participants. For the above reasons, my research approach does not qualify as ethnography.

Parker-Jenkins (2018) suggests the use of a new term ‘ethno-case study’ for an inquiry with people that employs techniques associated with ethnography but is limited in terms of time in the field, scope and engagement with data. However, I am reluctant to use the term ‘ethno-case study’ to describe my study as the term is new and may be misunderstood by some. I choose

to say that I conducted a case study using some aspects of an ethnographic approach and hence, research methods often associated with ethnography.

To collect data, I carefully observed the participants while they were at KBC, listened to what they said, watched what happened when it was time for reading, and their responses to reading time, and recorded all of these as fieldnotes. In addition, I asked questions informally, and through semi-structured interviews. The children spoke in English all the time rather than in any of their ethnic languages so I had no need for translation of what they said. Indeed, all the participants apart from one were literate only in English language. Odachi, the only participant who spoke a second language, learned English as a second language but could neither read nor write in her ethnic language which was the first language she learned. Data were also gathered through questionnaires that were administered to the participants, their parents, and the staff of KBC. All the questionnaires were in English as all the parents and KBC staff spoke English fluently despite the fact that it may have been a second language for some of them.

As previously stated, I wrote down my observations as fieldnotes. Fieldnotes here refer to the notes which researchers make of the observations in the fieldwork that they consider to be relevant to the research project, and are usually observations of the participants, events and/or locations (Walford, 2009; Wolfinger, 2002). Fieldnotes are important in an ethnographic style approach to research because they are the traditional means for recording observations and interview data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983/2007). Details of observations fade with the passage of time; hence researchers will look to their fieldnotes to provide an accurate record of the observation. Knowing this, I always carried with me a journal where I recorded my fieldnotes as soon as possible after I had made an observation.

Hammersley & Atkinson (1983/2007) argue that it can be difficult to suspend one's preconceptions when researching familiar settings as the researcher may find what is already obvious to him/her. Aware of this possibility, I followed their suggestion and treated the book club as anthropologically strange, and endeavoured to make explicit whatever presuppositions I may have had as a Nigerian who has lived in Nigeria for a few decades. Geertz (1973) highlights the importance of gathering rich data and using 'thick description' in ethnography, by which he means giving detailed, contextualized descriptions that reveal hidden meanings that may be culturally specific. Although my study is not an ethnography but case study, I realize the importance of gathering data that reveals the richness and complexities of my study

and have endeavoured to be detailed and precise both in my descriptions of what data I collected, and in my interpretations of it.

Geertz (1973) argues that what makes an ethnographic account worthy of attention is not so much the author's ability to capture the facts and record them, but the ability to interpret the facts. "A good interpretation of anything – a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation" (*ibid.*, p. 18). According to Spradley (1980/2016), every culture mostly consists of tacit knowledge, and inference must be made by carefully listening to what people say, observing their behavior and studying cultural artifacts and their use. As a Nigerian who grew up in Nigeria and has spent most of my adult years there, I have explicit cultural knowledge of the place and people, and have used my knowledge, observation and study of participants to make inferences. Accordingly, data interpretation was guided by social discourse and/or the culture of the setting, and I have tried to give rich descriptions of the culture, and all possible interpretations of what data I gathered.

Cliff Hodges's (2010b) case study of 12-13 year old habitual and committed readers and Barrs & Cork's (2001) case study of the links between the study of literature and writing development at Key Stage 2 have been very helpful in my understanding of case study and have influenced the design of my research. Interestingly, both case studies involve children and their readings, and highlight the fact that children are capable of providing data that show the complexities and richness of their reading habits. I have particularly found Cliff Hodges's (2010b) collages to be a valuable research method as it shows graphically and brings to the fore the fact that children's reading journeys are rarely static, but like rivers, are bound to change over time. Burnett & Myers' (2002) examination of children's literacy practices outside school also provides evidence of children's ability to investigate and report on their lives. The participants of the study, four Year 3 children and four Year 6 children, took photographs of their literacy activities and interpreted the images thereby allowing the researchers to access their literacy world. My experiences running a book club (not KBC) and several holiday camps for children made me aware that children are capable of providing testimony about their experiences and associations and should be researched with, rather than researched about (Greene & Hogan, 2005; Thomson, 2008). I believe that when children fully engage with the research process and take pleasure in it, they can offer invaluable insights into their worlds. Therefore, my approach was to research with the children by making them see themselves as participants rather than as mere objects of the research.

3.3.1 The Case in this Study

A good case study needs to be a self-contained entity that has fairly distinct boundaries (Yin, 2014). The case or unit of analysis for my study was the KBC in Nigeria, and the distinct boundaries were the 9–12 year olds that attended KBC (the study's main participants), parents of the participants, KBC staff, time (spring and summer vacation, 2017), and participants' reading activities at home and at KBC. I researched in a book club rather than in a primary school because I wanted participants who already were readers. Although I recognized that not everyone who attends a book club may be there because of interest in reading, I believed that a book club would offer me a much better chance of finding readers than a primary school would.

My choice of KBC as the case was because KBC runs educational programmes for children, and strongly promotes RfP. Therefore, through KBC, I knew I would have the opportunity to interact with children and collect in-depth data on their engagement with RfP. KBC is in a city so I was aware that gender would not likely be as much of an issue as one may find in a rural area in Nigeria as the club would have children of both sexes in attendance. Had the study taken place in a rural area in Nigeria, there is a strong probability that female children would not have been available to participate in the study as they would have been saddled with many domestic chores.

Set up in 2007 as a library and book club for children, KBC has over time expanded to include other activities and academic lessons for children. I had visited KBC in 2014 and seen that the reading rooms had shelves with books. However, I had not studied the reading rooms critically then. My newly gained knowledge of how space affects social relationships and could be used to support children's development as readers placed me in a better position to assess the reading spaces at KBC during my fieldwork trips and helped me to analyse if the use of the spaces at KBC contributed to the development of the KBC children as readers. I will discuss this further in the chapter on factors that affected the children's reading.

During term-time, KBC runs an after-school programme from 2pm – 6pm (the school day ends by 2pm in Nigeria) on Mondays to Fridays, and a half-day programme on Saturdays. During the vacation periods, it runs an educational programme for children between 3-17 years old. Even though the club accepts children who are between 3-17 years old, most of the attendees fall between the age range of 7-13 years old. By attendees, I mean the children and adolescents

that attend any of the programmes at KBC. The vacation programme usually begins at 9am daily and lasts until 1pm, and focuses on Reading, Writing and Mathematics, with emphasis on reading.

Attendance at KBC is based on paid registration which may be done weekly or monthly, and the monthly cost of registration for a child would be the equivalent of about 20 per cent of the monthly salary of an average middle-income person in Nigeria. That means the children who attend the KBC are from high income homes. The reading rooms have many books, most of which are novels and other literature written by well-known foreign writers in English, e.g. Enid Blyton, Geronimo Stilton, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and Max Lucado. There are also books written in English by popular Nigerian writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Registered members may read books in any of the reading rooms or borrow them to take home. The average vacation attendance is 32, while the average term-time attendance is ten. More detailed descriptions of KBC will be given in Section 3.6 where I discuss the main study.

My understanding of Nigerian culture made me aware that it was very unlikely that all the parents would give consent for their children to participate in a research project during term-time as participation would be regarded as a distraction from the students' studies. In Nigeria, academic grades are considered very important, and most parents would rather their children concentrate all their efforts during term-time on activities that directly help them to improve their grades in school. Also, children usually have multiple home-works and might themselves not be willing to participate. Therefore, my study was carried out during the Nigerian vacation periods of spring and summer in 2017. I chose 9–12 year olds as the main participants because most children at KBC in this age bracket are fluent in reading and able to engage in RfP independently.

I discussed my intentions with the director of KBC in 2015, and she showed willingness for KBC to be used as the case for my research. Before the start of fieldwork, I requested her to sign a formal consent form (Appendix A) which she did. I also requested the parents of 9–12 year olds who were willing to participate in the research to sign a formal consent form (Appendix B). There are usually different sources of data within a case (Denscombe, 2017; Yin, 2014), and I hold the opinion that in addition to the participants, key people in their lives, e.g. their parents, can provide invaluable insight into the children's reading activities. Hence, I sought information on the children's reading habits from both KBC staff and the parents of the

children. As expected, I sought their informed consent to participate in the study before I began data collection and requested them to sign consent forms designed for KBC staff and the parents of participants respectively (Appendices C & D). All the consent forms were written in English.

Before I began the actual research process, I took time to address the children informally. I did this informally because I did not want them to regard the research process as some formal programme. I provided information about the research so that they would be able to actively participate in the research process. During the address, I aimed to discover the children's understanding of research, make connections with their experiences, allay whatever fears they had about participation in the research, and provide information about my research interests, confidentiality, and their rights and responsibilities. The informal address provided an opportunity for the children to reflect on, discuss and ask questions about the research. I observed that they were curious about the research and willing to participate in it. At this point, their questions mostly centred on their ability to participate in the research, and I assured them that I would assist and guide them where they needed guidance. With the introduction of each method, I again explained to them the focus of my research and re-emphasized confidentiality and their rights and responsibilities. Their specific reactions to each method will be discussed in Section 3.4.

Case study fieldwork often takes the research in unexpected directions (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995); therefore, I was open to redefining issues, reframing my research questions, and seizing opportunities to learn the unexpected in the course of carrying out fieldwork. I was also conscious of inbuilt assumptions and guarded against them impacting the data I collected and my interpretation of the data.

3.4 Methods

Simons (2009) defines methods as “the techniques of research, such as interviewing and observing” (p. 3) that are chosen to gather data. Based on my constructionist epistemological stance, and the interpretative theoretical perspective and case study methodology I have adopted, I have chosen the qualitative methods of creating visual images (collage-making), observation, questionnaire and interview (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015; Denscombe, 2017). These four methods and their strengths and weaknesses will be described in this section.

3.4.1 Method One: Visual Method (Collage-making)

The first method I used to gather data was visual because many children are interested in images and take pleasure in engagement in visual research (Thomson, 2008). Children who have difficulty in expressing themselves through oral and written texts may be able to convey their thoughts and emotions visually. Thus, a visual method allows most children to participate in the research and represent their experiences and narratives (*ibid.*). The specific visual method I used was collage-making, inspired by the ‘critical incidents’ collage-making used by Cliff Hodges (2010b) in her study of 12-13 year old readers.

Collage is “the process of using fragments of found images or materials and gluing them to a flat surface to portray phenomena” (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010, para. 4). I chose collage because as Cliff Hodges (2010b) points out, it generates rich and valuable data for the researcher. Unlike drawing, it does not stir in the individual concerns about artistic ability (Thomson, 2008). Another advantage of using collages as the first method was that it created an opportunity for the children to think about and construct information on their leisure activities and reading habits, all of which helped them respond to questions in the interviews and questionnaires.

I showed the children the collages that had been made by participants of the pilot study and told them that they would each be given materials to make a similar collage that would show how they had spent their free time in the past year. The children tended to view the collage-making as an arts and craft activity. However, one or two of them expressed doubts about their ability to accurately recall how they had spent their leisure time in the past year. Regardless of the doubts they expressed, these children, as well as other participants, were enthusiastic about making a collage. Some of them asked if they would be allowed to take their collages home. In reply, I explained to them that I needed to keep the collages so that I could get information about how they had spent their leisure time. Before the activity, I asked the participants to mention their leisure time activities, and from all those mentioned, created a list of the ten most popular according to votes from the children. Each activity was assigned a colour based on the available coloured papers as can be seen in Figure 3.1:



Figure 3.1: Activities for the Collage and their Assigned Colours

I allowed the children to pick a colour for each activity but kept aside the yellow coloured paper for reading until all the other coloured papers had been assigned an activity. This was because I wanted reading to be represented by a colour that would stand out. The children were each given a piece of white cardboard to draw the outline of a winding river. The winding river represented the past year of the participants' lives, and was divided into 6 segments. The 6 segments represented six different periods within the year: the three school terms and the three vacation periods. Thus, by encouraging the children to separate the year into these segments, it was easy for them to think about, and document the activities they spent their time on in the different periods. The participants were then given the cut-out papers of different colours and asked to pick and paste the papers on the drawn winding river based on how much time they had spent on the activity represented by the coloured paper. Thus, they created a collage of a winding river that represents a history of their leisure time activities in the past year. The collages showed what activities the participants had spent their leisure time on, and the more time was spent on an activity, the more its colour featured on a collage and vice versa.

The concept of a winding river is borrowed from Cliff Hodges (2010b) who writes that "Rivers are constantly in motion and ever-changing..." (p. 188). She viewed each child's personal reading history similar to a winding river in the sense that it affected and was affected by the terrain it passed through, and also argued that a representation of the children's readership as a winding river would allow the children to reflect on their reading history in terms of the space created with the interconnections with others and the time spent on reading. The metaphor of

a winding river is appealing to me because I believe that over time, the leisure habits of children may constantly change in the same manner. The collages made by the participants proved me right as they revealed that most of the leisure time activities of the children constantly changed over time.

I chose a collage of their leisure time activities rather than one of their reading habits because my prior experience running a book club for children made me aware that not all children who attend a book club may like reading. Some children attend book clubs to please their parents, and/or socialize with friends. If asked to make a collage that represents their reading history, children who are not habitual readers may either refrain from the activity or make a collage that gives inaccurate information about their reading habits. Also, I did not want the focus of the collage to be on reading so that the participants would not get tempted to give responses they believed would please me.

The collages provided insights into the participants' leisure time activities and what they believed to be the extent to which they had read in the past year. However, they did not show how much time was actually spent on leisure reading or any activity, and neither did they indicate the frequency of the leisure reading; I looked to the questionnaires and interviews to provide data on the time spent on reading and the frequency, regularity and length of the reading sessions. The quantity of coloured pieces of paper used by each participant for a particular activity on his/her collage allows a comparison of the different activities the participant spent his/her leisure time on; however, it is not a basis on which to make comparisons between the participants about how much time was spent on the activity as the children were given freedom to decide the quantity of paper they used for their collages.

In my second fieldwork trip, two participants had favourite pastimes that were not listed among the activities for the collage-making. From the listed activities for collage-making, they chose the activities they did *not* engage in and substituted these with their favourite pastimes; fortunately, reading was never substituted. Although a collage of the children's leisure time activities may appear self-evident, I did not close down the possibility of an interpretation that differs from the obvious. While the participants created their collages, I interacted with them, casually asked questions about the collages, and noted their answers as fieldnotes. Through this, I got explanations for collages that appeared unusual and also uncovered embedded stories that added to the depth of the data. In Chapter 4, I discuss the findings from the collages.

3.4.2 Limitations of the Collage

One limitation of a collage of the children's leisure activities over time is that it requires the participants to recall and record events that are in the past. I feared that some of the participants might not accurately recall how much time they had spent on the various activities in the past and might end up confusing this with their leisure activities at the time of the research. My fears were not unfounded as a participant expressed doubts about his ability to accurately recall how much time he had spent on the various activities in the past. To forestall this, I did three things. Firstly, the children were encouraged to think about each period of the year in isolation and how they had spent their leisure time in that period. Secondly, during the process, I got the children to discuss what things they had done in their leisure time during each term time, where they had spent each vacation period in the past year, and the activities they had engaged in during the vacation periods. Through this, their memories were somewhat jolted as the children talked about trips they had taken to various places within and outside the country and the activities they had engaged in during those periods. Gardner (2003) suggests that human memory could be unreliable and sometimes need probing to reveal forgotten memories. This appeared to be the case for some of the children.

Thirdly, I took the completed collages home, analysed each collage, and thereby arrived at each participant's top three or four activities as shown by his/her collage. A few days later, I asked each participant to mention his/her top three leisure activities in the past year and compared the answers given to that which the collage showed. In most cases, the answers given by the participants matched what was represented on the collage, though in some cases there was a slight modification in the order. Wherever there was any discrepancy, I showed the participant his/her collage analysis and asked him/her to carefully think about how s/he may have spent his/her free time, and gave him/her the opportunity to modify his/her collage. Of the participants whose answers were somewhat different from what their collages showed, a few modified their collages while others chose not to, insisting that they had given careful thought on how they spent their leisure time at the time they made the collages.

Another challenge I foresaw with the collage was the possibility of participants pasting colours that wrongly represent their leisure activities. To forestall this, I kept before the participants the cardboard paper that had the code (Figure 3.1) which showed what activity each coloured paper represented. I also had the children carefully think about how much time they had spent on each activity at a given time period, pick the amount of paper that best represented the time

spent on each activity, put the papers side by side on the segment that represented that time period, and check to ensure that the amount of paper of each colour tallied with the time spent on the activity represented by the colour. It was only after this that the papers were pasted on the cardboard. In addition to the above, I repeatedly reminded the participants of what activity each colour represented, and as they worked, I probed to ensure they were mindful of what they were doing.

3.4.3 Method Two: Observation

Observation is a unique method of collecting data in social science research because it provides the researcher with access to the event as it occurs, requires no active effort from the participants, and is not dependent on the report of the participants but on what the researcher witnesses (Darlington & Scott, 2002; Denscombe, 2017). It is useful in case study research as it helps the researcher have a greater understanding of the case (Stake, 1995), provides a basis for further analysis and interpretation, and a cross-check of data obtained in interviews (Simons, 2009). Observation enables the researcher to have a greater understanding of the case by providing access to the context and meaning surrounding what the participants say and do. It also has the advantage of capturing the experience of participants who are not articulate (Denscombe, 2017).

It was important to me that in addition to getting data from the participants, I also got data that was generated independently of the participants, and I looked to observation for this. Loh (2015) indicates that physical space could affect children's attitudes to reading and, as earlier discussed, Loh *et al.* (2017) demonstrate that strategies such as creating programmes to excite readers and making books visible encourage reading. I therefore used observation to identify details of the book club, the reading environment it provided, what network of resources that support reading it offered, and to determine how much the physical space of the book club enhanced the participants' engagement with RfP. These will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Cliff Hodges (2010b) argues that "reading is an activity which is elusive and contested in its scope, nature and discourse" (p. 183), and that data cannot be derived from an observation of the physical act of reading. I agree on the elusive nature of reading and did not use observation to gather data on the extent to which the children read, but on what RfP looks like at KBC. My observation of the children, their conversations with one another on reading and/or books, and how engaged or distracted they were during periods of reading also provided me with data that enabled me to understand their engagement with RfP and the extent to which they read within

that context. I have found no studies on reading that employed the method of observation, perhaps because of the elusive nature of reading pointed out by Cliff Hodges (2010b); however, Conteh, Gregory, Kearney, and Mor-Sommerfield (2005) and Hammersley (2006) indicate the usefulness of observation in helping the researcher get the perspective of the participants, as by observing the participant(s), the researcher knows what people say and do in particular contexts. I was transparent and had revealed to the participants from the onset of the research that I would be observing them with the aim of learning from what they did while at KBC as I wanted to know more about how they read.

Denscombe (2017) writes about two kinds of observation used in the social sciences: the systematic observation which is linked with the production of quantitative data, and the participant observation which involves the researcher participating in events and leads to the production of qualitative data. I carried out participant observation, though my participation was at a minimal level. By this I mean that rather than remain a silent fixture in the room or at KBC, I sat with the children and read during the reading periods, joined in activities such as arts and crafts, and casually engaged with the children in conversations so as to create a rapport with them as suggested by Darlington & Scott (2002).

My observations were recorded as fieldnotes. Following the suggestion of Spradley (1980/2016), I kept a detailed record of observations that stated precisely what I observed, and a separate record of my feelings and reflections. Examples of the recorded observations are: (i) when the wind blew several pages of the book that Mike was reading, Mike quickly turned back to the page he had been on and continued reading until he was done reading that page; (ii) Jide and Chidi each hid a book under the table and read during the shared reading period. Lizzy, a KBC staff, caught them reading and scolded them. She asked them to put away the books and pay attention while the shared reading was going on; and (iii) when there was power outage, the room soon became warm, and it appeared that the children were affected by the heat as most of them quickly became restless.

Using observation as one of the earlier methods enabled me to develop a familiarity with the method which helped during interviews (Angrosino, 2008). Spradley (1980/2016) asserts that human beings unconsciously block out most of the things happening around them in order not to experience overload and argues that participant observation requires researchers to increase their awareness, “to tune in things usually tuned out” (*ibid.*, p. 56). I strove to be explicitly aware of things that may ordinarily be taken for granted and viewed both KBC and the

participants with a wide-angle lens, and carefully wrote down all my observations including those that may appear trivial.

Hammersley & Atkinson (1983/2007) suggest that the researcher should be selective in what is observed and resist the temptation to try to observe everything that goes on as lengthy periods of observation uninterrupted by periods of recording will likely result in data of poor quality. I agree that the observation periods should be interrupted with periods of reflexive recording, but argue that regardless, the observation period should be limited depending on what is observed and the frequency of the occurrence in order that the researcher may remain attentive. Hence, my observation periods were limited to no more than 60 minutes each to ensure that I did not lose alertness or the energy to record my observations. Aware that I could fall into the trap of confirming what I already knew, I consciously suspended previous knowledge and assumptions to observe and record what was in the setting. Observations whose meanings were not obvious were further explored in interviews.

3.4.4 Limitations of the Observation Method

Bassey (1999), and Angrosino (2008) point out that observation can be intrusive and could make the participants alter their behaviour in some way in order to please the researcher. To guard against this, I followed the recommendations of Darlington & Scott (2002) and participated in some of the activities at KBC (reading periods, arts and craft etc.) to reduce the ‘observer effect’ and help the children to be relaxed and more natural in my presence. Specifically, I sometimes led the arts and craft sessions and showed them how to make beaded bracelets and other things. I also read to them during the read aloud period.

Denscombe (2017) argues that the reliability of data from observation is open to doubt since the data are reliant on the researcher’s self and therefore subject to the biases of the researcher. To safeguard against the data being influenced by my framework, I familiarized myself with the environment before the commencement of the research so as to gain better understanding of the context being observed and consciously tried to set aside my preconceived notions about how RfP enhances readers’ lives. Another limitation of the observation method is that it does not provide access to participants’ thoughts and emotions, but as I stated earlier, I did not look to observation to provide data on the extent to which the children read, but data on the reading environment and the children’s perceived attitudes to reading.

3.4.5 Method Three: Questionnaire

My third method of collecting data was questionnaires. I designed and administered three different questionnaires (Appendices E, F, and G), one for each of the following groups: the participants, their parents, and the staff of KBC. As earlier stated, the reading environment may be important in fostering children's love for reading (Chambers, 1991; Layne, 2009) and the motivation to read in adolescent children may be strongly influenced by the support of parents, family members and peers (Klauda, 2009; Moje *et al.*, 2008). Based on their study of what, how often and why adolescents in one urban community choose to read, Moje *et al.* (2008) argue that the reading practices of some adolescents are embedded in social networks as many of the participants read as a means of maintaining social networks and relationships. Consequently, a study on children's engagement with RfP would not be complete without a survey of their reading in home environments. I therefore looked to questionnaires to help me determine the influence of their home environments and KBC on the children's reading.

I chose to use questionnaires to get information from the participants' parents because questionnaires can be completed at a convenient time. Also, as stated by Gillham (2007), questionnaires have standardized questions meaning that all the respondents are given the same set of questions to answer. As recommended by Denscombe (2017), for ease of completion, the questionnaires were no longer than four pages, had closed and open-ended questions, all of which were simple, straight-forward, short and crucial to the research.

To help me devise the questionnaires, I looked at several questionnaires on reading. I drew on the Reading Habits Interview (Monk, 2013), Redriff Reading Survey (Redriff Primary School, 2016) and National Literacy Trust Reading for Pleasure Survey (Udston Primary School, 2016) to develop the questionnaire for participants. The National Literacy Trust Survey: Helping Your Child to Enjoy Reading (Brockley Primary School, 2016) and the Parental Reading Questionnaire (Altham School, 2015) were helpful in devising the questionnaires for parents and KBC staff. In addition, I formulated many questions of my own. The questions on each questionnaire were developed to relate to both the research questions and questions on the other questionnaires. To ensure that every item on the questionnaires and the Interview Questions (Appendix H) was relevant to my study, I created a grid (Appendix I) that provides the mapping of questions to the research questions.

In order to generate data that specifically addressed the research questions, the questionnaires had questions about the children's out-of-school activities, reading behaviours, attitudes to

reading, estimates of their reading frequencies, books read, home resources supporting reading, and parents' attitudes to reading. To avoid the influence of parents on the responses of the children, the participants completed their questionnaires in KBC, and, thereafter, were given questionnaires to take to their parents. While the participants completed their questionnaires, I stayed in the room with them and answered questions on anything they were not quite clear about. I reminded them that they did not have to answer any question they did not want to answer; therefore, when I went through the completed questionnaires, I did not ask any of the participants to respond to the questions they had left blank. Rather, I focused on analyzing the data from the questionnaires and comparing them with data from the collages and my observation. Where I saw some incongruity between answers given by the same respondent in the questionnaires or in the data provided by the same participant through different methods, I probed further in the interview sessions.

3.4.6 Limitations of Questionnaires

According to Moore (2000), challenges with questionnaires lie with the response rate obtained. To help me monitor the responses received, I opened a register with columns for the participants and their parents. On receipt of the response from a participant's parent, I signed across the participant's name in the register. In a few cases, I had to send out reminder notes and a second set of questionnaires to parents who had not sent in their completed questionnaires after a few weeks. In spite of my efforts, the parents of two siblings who participated in the first fieldwork study, never returned their questionnaires. Fortunately, during my second fieldwork, I was able to get the mother of these participants to complete and return the parents' questionnaires for both children. Another challenge is the fact that the questionnaire is not likely to produce a great depth of information as people tend to fill them in quickly with an immediate response and not a well-thought out or detailed response. To avoid this, the children were allowed to take as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaires. Denscombe & Aubrook (1992) also note that the respondents could "give answers geared to what they believe are the 'correct' answers or the answers the researchers might want to find" (p. 122). Aware of this, I repeatedly reminded the children that there were no right or wrong answers. Other challenges with the questionnaire are that the wording of the questions may affect the respondents' answers, the respondents may have difficulty in expressing themselves in writing due to language problems, and the researcher may misunderstand the respondent's answers. Accordingly, I encouraged the children to seek clarification on any question that was not clear,

and two participants did. On the accuracy of the respondents' answers, I looked to other sources of data for confirmation of the data provided through the questionnaires.

3.4.7 Method Four: Interview

As Fontana and Frey (2008) and Stake (1995) point out, interviews provide a powerful way for the researcher to discover multiple views of a study and get depth of information. They allow the researcher to exercise considerable flexibility in the data collection process with regards to the direction of the discussion, the areas explored and depth covered (Fontana & Frey, 2008) and also provide opportunity for data to be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected (Denscombe, 2017). I therefore used interviews to explore the reading habits of the participants, and to seek their perspectives on reading. I deliberately chose interviews as the last method of data collection for two reasons: (i) I hoped that, by the time of the interview, I would have already established a rapport with the children as Simons (2009) suggests that this may boost the generation of in-depth data during the interview process, and (ii) using interviews as the last method provided me with the opportunity to get clarification on previously collected data.

The forms of interview I used were face-to-face semi-structured group interviews, and semi-structured individual interviews. I chose to do group interviews and individual interviews because each interview type has certain advantages that the other lacks. As pointed out by Warwick & Chaplain (2017), I found that the one-on-one interviews allowed the interviewees to express their personal views without being suppressed by the dominant view and made it easier for me to identify the ideas and opinions of each participant. On the other hand, the group interviews stimulated discussions, aided the participants to recall and freely share their experiences (Lewis, 1992), and were seemingly less threatening to any one individual whilst providing a cross-check on the consistency of perspectives (Simons, 2009).

I opted for the semi-structured interview rather than the structured because structured interviews leave little or no room for flexibility, whereas semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to be flexible in the order of questions, and the interviewee to develop ideas and give better responses on the issues raised (Denscombe, 2017; Taylor, 2013). Interview questions were created and asked of participants, and the same schedule was used for both individual and group interviews (Appendix H). As I did when devising questions for the different questionnaires, I looked at existing interviews on reading habits (Atwell, 2007; MSU Billings, 2010) to guide me in developing questions for the interviews. Some of the questions

were open-ended to allow participants to express their views. A grid I created, Appendix I, mentioned in Section 3.4.5, shows how each interview question relates to the research questions.

Interview data included discourse as well as “nonverbal features of the interaction” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 139) such as rolling of the eyeball, or a shrug, all of which were recorded as fieldnotes where possible. Discourse here refers to “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (Gee, 2011, para. 6). In my first fieldwork trip, ten individual interviews and two group interviews were conducted. In the second fieldwork trip, seven individual interviews and three group interviews were recorded. The interviews were audio recorded, and I also took brief notes during the interview, and sometimes, immediately after the interview to ensure that my observations and reflections during the interview were recorded while they still remained fresh in my memory as suggested by Denscombe (2017).

To avoid undue interruption and noise, the individual interviews were conducted either in the director’s office which was upstairs or in a secluded space. Conversely, the group interviews took place downstairs in what could be considered the common reading room. All the interviews were conducted in English. The group interviews were usually conducted between individual interviews though sometimes on different days. Because the interviews were semi-structured, the length of the individual interviews varied, and some of them lasted for a little less than 30 minutes while others lasted for over 40 minutes. The group interviews lasted for about 30 minutes each. Each group interview had between five to seven children to ensure I got a sufficient range of views. Some children participated in two group interviews as the group interviews were held on different days. For each group interview, I sat with the interviewees at an oval shaped table. However, I did not sit at either end of the table as I did not want the children to think of me as some authority figure. Rather, I sat in the middle among them, so they would feel at ease with me.

Just as I did at the start of the individual interviews, I began each group interview with an explanation of what the research was about and told the children that there were no right or wrong answers and that they had a right not to answer any question they did not want to answer. At the start of the first group interview, some of the children were uncomfortable with the idea of being recorded, especially when I told them that they would have to say their names. I

suspect that they may have had fears about their parents' reactions should they listen to the recording or see the interview transcript. When I noticed their discomfort, I assured them that I would not share the recording with anyone and would change all their names in the transcript to ensure anonymity. They then asked if they could mention fictitious names and have me call them by the fictitious names during the interview. I explained that if we did that, I would have difficulty in matching the data from the interview with data they had provided through other methods. I again assured them that once I had completed the research, I would change all their names. They appeared satisfied with my explanation and as soon as we got into the interview, were eager to share their views on the questions asked.

To ensure that all the children got a chance to express their views on each issue raised, each question was directed at every child, and everyone was encouraged to give an answer. For each question, I asked each child if s/he had a response to give; however, I did not force anyone who did not want to speak to do so. As I had instructed them, the children lifted their hands when they wanted to speak, and I called each child by name to speak. This was done to avoid more than one person speaking at the same time. I frequently called the children by their names so that I would know which child had given the response I got. Some children were very eager to share their views on virtually every question asked, while others were less vocal but still spoke every now and then. One child, Caleb, was quite quiet and frequently needed encouragement to share his views on the issues raised. However, from my observations of his behavior at the book club and the knowledge of his background and family situation, I deduced that his behavior was because he probably felt intimidated by the other children. In later chapters, especially my analysis of the children's collages, I will write more about Caleb.

Storybook-elicitation (the use of widely considered popular children's books to prompt discussions) was incorporated into both the individual and the group interviews. This was done as it has the potential to provide a tangible prompt, invoke comments, spur the interviewees to reflect on, discuss and analyse the issues discussed (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015; Thomson, 2008), and in some of the individual interviews, it was quite effective in getting the children to talk about the books they had read. I had originally planned to ask the children to bring in their favourite book(s), display the books, and invite the children to talk about them. However, I observed that not all of the children had favourite books and authors, and so I selected popular books and authors and took them in for the interviews.

Conducting individual and group interviews allowed me to compare the responses I got from each child in both interviews and to see if a child's response to the same question in a group interview tallied with or differed from the response to the same question in the individual interview. In my first fieldwork trip, I observed that among the children whose individual interviews were held after the group interviews, one or two children tended to give responses during the individual interviews that tallied with the responses given by the children with dominant voices in the group interviews. In particular, I noticed that in his individual interview, Caleb who was mostly quiet during the group interview, sought to give responses similar to the responses the dominant children had given in the group interview. To avoid some participants being influenced by the views of other participants, in my second fieldwork trip, the individual interviews were usually conducted before the group interviews. As all the interviews were semi-structured, new questions were often introduced based on the responses the participants gave. Additionally, based on my analyses of the participants' collages, I devised personalised questions for the participants. For instance, when I realized that Mike's collage indicated that he did not do any leisure reading at home, I asked him specific questions about his home reading practices during his personal interview.

Between the two fieldwork trips, I presented my study at a few conferences. Based on some of the questions and comments I received after my presentations, I added new questions to the list of interview questions for participants. For instance, I was asked if I considered language to be a barrier or a major factor in Nigerian children's engagement with RfP. In my second trip, I asked the participants if they spoke or were literate in any other language apart from English, and what language was used for communication in their homes. Also, analysis of the data I got from the interviews in the first trip made me realize that I needed to know more about the participants and their childhood reading history. Accordingly, in the individual interviews I conducted in my second fieldwork trip, I introduced questions about the participant's family, asked them about their early experiences with RfP, and if anyone had read bedtime stories to them when they were young. This distinction is clear in Appendix H.

3.4.8 Limitations of Interviews

Moore (2000) highlights the following concerns with the interview method: (i) the respondents may supply answers that they feel the interviewer expects, or desires and (ii) the interviewees may never have given much thought to the issues raised and may be unaware of their beliefs and attitudes to the issue and therefore may not have a ready answer to the question. The

possibility of the researcher misunderstanding the response of the interviewees also exists. Additionally, Fontana & Frey (2008) point out that in group interviews, dominant opinions may interfere with individual opinions, and Denscombe (2017) writes about a fifth limitation, the interviewer effect which is when the interviewer's identity impacts the interviewee, and thereby affects how much information the interviewee is willing to divulge.

To overcome the first limitation, I worked hard to put the respondents at ease, and repeatedly reassured them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and that their views were acceptable and valid. To overcome the second limitation, where the questions required greater depth, I gave the respondent more time to think and reflect on the questions before responding. To overcome the third limitation, I also observed the gestures and postures of the respondents and encouraged them to elaborate on answers where this was required. Furthermore, the data from the interviews were checked with data from other sources. To guard against the fourth limitation, I watched out for, and ensured that dominant views did not drown other voices in group interviews. I believe that my interactions with the children through the other methods made them familiar with me and thereby reduced the interviewer effect. In addition, I wore conventional clothes, and was courteous, receptive and neutral so that the interviewees could feel comfortable with me.

3.5 The Pilot Studies

Denscombe (2017) and Moore (2000) recommend carrying out a pilot study to test the methods and ensure they work. In July 2016, I undertook a pilot in Cambridge with three 9–12 year olds from Nigeria and Pakistan; I wanted participants who had similarities with the participants I would work with in the main study. At the time of the study, all three children, Oluchi, Mariam and Amir (pseudonyms), had been in Cambridge for less than a year. The pilot employed collage-making, questionnaires, and interview methods, and gave me the opportunity to test these methods as well as further hone my research skills.

Starting the pilot with the collage-making method got the children very excited about the study and made them enthusiastic participants. They unreservedly shared their opinions of what activities they enjoyed doing in their leisure time and their opinions about reading because they did not realize that the collage was aimed at discovering the extent to which they had read. Findings from the data revealed the extent to which each child read in the year leading up to the time of the pilot study. Beyond the findings, the objective of the pilot was achieved as it showed me what changes I needed to make in my data gathering instruments. The collages

made during this study revealed the need to select a unique and easily identifiable coloured paper to represent reading. Likewise, the interviews and questionnaires showed the need to explain what ‘e-books’ and ‘leisure reading’ mean. They also showed that words such as ‘frequently’ and ‘occasionally’ should be replaced with simpler words that Nigerian children are familiar with like ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’. Accordingly, I replaced the words and worked further on both the questionnaire and interview questions. A second pilot study with the same participants was conducted in December 2016. Findings from the second pilot showed that I did not need to make further changes. In the following section, I will discuss the main study by first describing KBC, and then sharing details of each fieldwork trip and the participants in that trip.

3.6 The Main Study

3.6.1 Krown Book Club (KBC)

KBC meets in one of five terraced houses in a block. The house has three spacious rooms and two toilets upstairs. Downstairs, there is a kitchen, a space designed to be a dining room, and another space designed to be the living room. All the rooms upstairs are carpeted. The biggest room upstairs is the director’s office. However, the director never stays in her office; she usually sits on the large desk in the ‘living room’ unless she is busy reading to the older children or teaching them, in which case she stays with them in the ‘dining’ room. The two other rooms upstairs are furnished as play rooms for younger children. Sometimes the younger children watch a video or cartoon in the director’s office.

The entrance door of the house opens into the large space that was possibly designed to be the living room. Here, there are many shelves with books on the wall and on the ground, and a few are for sale; the children may not read or borrow the books that are for sale. There is also a large table with a chair where the KBC director usually sits. Adjoining the living room is the space that I believe was designed to be a dining room. In the ‘dining’ room, there is a large oval table and many chairs arranged around the table. The older children (mostly eight years and above) sit at the oval table and do their reading, ‘Read Aloud’, Arts and Crafts and other activities. When the children need to act out a drama, dance, or carry out some other activity that requires more space, they go over to the ‘living’ room which is more spacious. The period from 9am – 10am was set aside for reading. Usually, I picked up a book, sat at the oval table with the children and ‘read’ while observing them. A few times, I read aloud to the children

during the ‘read-aloud’ period. In no time, they became familiar with me and saw me as a regular fixture of the KBC environment.

As can be seen above, KBC provided a relaxed and comfortable environment that probably encouraged the children to read for pleasure. Furthermore, the availability of diverse reading materials which children could self-select to read and the presence of enabling adults may have helped the children to do more leisure reading while at KBC than they ordinarily would do.

3.6.2 FieldWork Phase 1: The Easter Vacation Programme

My first fieldwork trip was carried out in the spring vacation, 2017. Prior to this, I sent to the KBC director consent forms for herself and staff members of KBC (Appendices A and C respectively) as well as the consent form for the parents of the participants (Appendix B). Hence, before the Easter programme began, she discussed the research and its purpose with parents of 9–12 year olds as they called to register their children in the programme. She gave them the parents’ letter and consent form to read through, and many of the parents signed the consent form at the time they were registering their children for the holiday programme. As other parents brought their children to KBC after the programme began, the director introduced me to them. I described the study and its purpose and explained that participation was voluntary. These parents also signed the consent forms for their children to participate in the study.

3.6.3 Fieldwork Phase 1: The Participants

Although there were about 17 children attending the KBC Easter programme, I chose ten of the children to participate in the study as I sought participants in the age range of 9–12 years old. Seven of the children fell into this age category. Two of the children at KBC were over 14 years old, and eight children were under nine years old. From the eight children who were under nine years old, three were eight years old and one girl, Karen, was seven years going on eight. Apart from a boy who did not seem keen on participating in the study, the other 8 year olds and Karen were eager to participate in the study and I allowed them to take part. I was initially very reluctant to include Karen, but the director of KBC argued that even though she was yet to turn eight, she was a voracious reader who was exceptionally clever. The more I observed and interacted with Karen, the more I agreed with the director’s assessment of her. I was indeed glad that I had her participate in the study as I found her comments in the group interviews and even her personal interview invaluable.

The children at KBC were from different parts of Nigeria, predominantly states in the southern and western parts of the country. Some of the children had western names while others had names that reflected their ethnicities. To make it difficult for anyone to know the actual identity of the participants, I gave them pseudonyms that differ from the ethnicity of their names. I will give brief descriptions of all the participants in the first phase of data collection below. As their profiles show, all the participants were distinct individuals, and although there were important similarities among them, there were also significant differences. I hope the profiles convey these and enable the reader to come to know my study's participants. The participants are listed in no particular order.

(1) Charles: 10 year old Charles joined KBC midway in the programme. He was a pupil at a prestigious private school in the city. Both his parents were well-educated and successful entrepreneurs who seemed to place great value on education. Charles had regularly attended KBC from the time he was about five years old but said he only attended the summer programmes. Charles was polite and confident. Even though he was unreserved and very willing to share his thoughts during interviews, he was thoughtful about what he said. Charles was raised in a print-rich environment and owned many books. His favourite leisure time activities were playing video games, outdoor sports, social media and reading. Charles enjoyed reading mystery books, books about World Wars 1 and 2, Greek mythologies, Geronimo Stilton books, and books in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Goose Bumps* series.

(2) Karen: As mentioned earlier, Karen was yet to turn eight years old at the time of the study. She had attended the holiday programmes at KBC ever since she was three years old. Cheerful and quite chatty, she came across as a charming little girl. Karen attended KBC with an older brother, Paul, who also participated in the study. She was eager to participate in the study and had no difficulty in expressing herself. One of the things that struck me about Karen was that when I asked her what three activities she enjoyed spending her leisure time on, she mentioned the three activities that had featured most prominently on her collage and listed them in the order her collage had ranked them. This was a few days after she had made the collage, so it further convinced me that she evidently knew what activities she loved to spend her leisure time on. She was keen on discussing the books she had either read or was reading at the time. Her favourite authors were Roald Dahl, Shakespeare (in children's narrative versions), and Jeff Kinney.

(3) **Onome:** At 12 years of age, Onome was the oldest participant in the study during my first fieldwork trip. She had previously attended KBC when she was much younger so her attendance during the Easter period was her second time at KBC. Onome was easy-going, friendly and happy to help me with my research. She seemed to enjoy her time at KBC and often had a smile on her face. Although she did not come across as an engaged reader, in her questionnaire she indicated that she regularly read books and other materials and listed several books she had recently read and completed. Her favourite pastimes included singing, going on social media and watching music videos on the internet.

(4) **Caleb:** 8 year old Caleb lived with his family in one of the terraced houses in the same building as KBC. Aware that Caleb's family was going through some financial hardship, the director of KBC had allowed Caleb and his siblings to attend the Easter vacation programme without payment when she observed that they hung around outside KBC seeking to interact with the children who came for the programme. Caleb was willing to participate in the study but was withdrawn and taciturn. In his interview, he mostly responded with monosyllables. He showed little interest in reading and I observed that the only time he appeared to have a book with him was during the reading time.

(5) **Chidi:** Chidi, 10 years old, attended KBC with his twin brother, Jide. The Easter Vacation programme was the first programme at KBC that Chidi and his brother attended. Chidi was polite and well-spoken. He seemed to always have a book with him. I observed that Chidi often continued reading even when the reading period was over. At the time of his interview, his favourite authors and series were Jeff Kinney, Mark Twain and Supa Strikas.

(6) **Jide:** This was Jide's first time at KBC, and he appeared to like the programme. From listening in on conversations that he had with other participants, I gathered that he had read many of the books that the boys at KBC were reading. I also observed that he was often so deeply engaged in the book he was reading that he would hide it under the table and keep reading even when the reading period was over, and the staff were working with the children at KBC on some other activity. His favourite authors at the time were Jeff Kinney, Andrew Cope and Mark Twain.

(7) **Ngozi:** Ngozi was ten years old and had attended KBC from the time she was four years old. At first glance, she came across as quiet and perhaps shy, but on closer observation, I realized she was neither shy nor quiet. She sometimes chatted with the other children, but at other times, seemed lost in her own world. During the reading periods, she rarely seemed to

focus for a long period of time on the book she was reading. Although she often carried a book about, as did other children at KBC, and sometimes borrowed a book to take home, I do not know if she read the books or not, and did not find out during the research.

(8) Adanna: 10 year old Adanna joined the KBC vacation programme midway. It was her first time both at a KBC programme and at a book club, but she settled in in no time and enjoyed the activities at KBC. She was polite and friendly but looked quiet and somewhat reserved. Adanna loved reading and was a very engaged reader. She freely shared with me her thoughts on books and reading. She loved books about princesses, knights, histories, adventures, fantasy as well as factual books. Her favourite author was Ben Carson and her favourite series was *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

(9) Mike: Mike was one of the first participants I came into contact with when I got to KBC. He was not yet nine years old at the time of my study but was willing to take part in it. It was the first time he was attending a KBC vacation programme and he was there with his younger sister. Mike often chatted with other participants but was not talkative. However, when asked questions, he responded with candid answers. I found his childlike openness and sincerity charming. He appeared very engaged during the reading period and came across as someone who enjoyed reading.

(10) Paul: Paul, Karen's brother, was ten years old at the time of the study. He had attended KBC almost every holiday from age five. Paul was chatty, lively and boisterous. He was quite popular at KBC and had a friendship that extended beyond KBC with some of the boys. Paul regularly engaged in, and sometimes appeared to dominate, discussions with other children. In the interviews, he freely shared his thoughts and opinions on reading and books generally. Paul's favourite pastimes included playing video games/ tablet, dancing, outdoor sports and reading.

3.6.4 FieldWork Phase 2: The Summer Vacation Programme

My second fieldwork was carried out during the summer vacation of 2017 and lasted for about seven weeks. The Summer Vacation Programme was very similar to the programme earlier run during the Easter period. However, this time, in addition to the morning sessions for children, there was a one-week afternoon programme for teenage girls. The afternoon programme began at 1.30 pm and lasted for two hours. The session focused on teaching the teenage girls about etiquette, dressing, make-up, advice about life, and it also had daily cooking classes. Ten teenagers, most of whom had recently completed secondary school education, attended the

afternoon programme. The morning programme was attended by a total of about 20 children, though a few of them attended the programme for just a few weeks.

3.6.5 Fieldwork Phase 2: The Participants

Although seven children participated in the research, I had to let go of the data from two of the participants: one was on vacation; the other was the daughter of a friend. The first gave responses to questions based on her life in the UK and I feared that findings from this participant may give misleading information about RfP in Nigeria, especially the social networks and affordances available to children there, hence the decision to leave out her data. For the second participant whose data is excluded, the participant's mother gave verbal consent for her daughter to participate in the study and promised to complete and return the consent forms and parents' questionnaire. Despite repeated reminder calls, she never returned the forms, and so I let go of the data sourced from her daughter.

The participants in my second fieldwork trip were from families with similar backgrounds as those of the participants in my first trip. They were also from different parts of Nigeria. As with the first set of participants, the participants in my second trip were given pseudonyms that differed from the ethnicity of their names. Below are the profiles of the five participants whose data were used.

(1) *Shehu*: Shehu was a quiet 9 year old pupil who attended a prestigious primary school in the city. His older sisters attended the afternoon session for teenagers. This was the first time Shehu was attending a programme at KBC, and he only attended the summer programme in the week the session for older girls was run. Even though he looked reserved, he was easy to talk to, and was very open about his reading habits, interests, and family life. He enjoyed outdoor sports, playing video games, watching movies/TV and reading. Shehu had many reading materials in his home and enjoyed reading fiction books, comics, comments on YouTube videos, amongst other materials.

(2) *Peter*: Although he was only ten years old at the time of the study, Peter had already completed the first year of secondary education and was going into the second year of secondary school. His older siblings also attended the summer vacation programme at KBC but did not take part in the study. Peter had no hesitation in expressing his thoughts and opinions on books, reading or anything, and unlike some participants, spoke very audibly throughout the interviews such that I rarely had to ask him to repeat what he said. Some of his favourite pastimes were watching TV, playing computer games and playing with his dog. Peter liked

fantasy, science-fiction, comedy, spy-related stories, adventure, action, fiction and in some cases, horror. He also enjoyed reading picture books, comics and anime cartoons.

(3) **Rose:** Rose was seven years old going on eight and was the youngest participant in my second fieldwork trip. She lived with her family in one of the nearby suburbs, and even though they lived far from KBC, her father unfailingly brought them throughout the duration of the programme. This was Rose's first time at a book club and although she was willing to participate in the study, she appeared shy and sometimes needed a little encouragement to speak up or share her views. However, I was careful not to put pressure on her to say more than she was willing to do and did not push for answers when she appeared reluctant to provide them. Her favourite pastimes included watching movies, playing video games, playing with her dolls and acting dramas with her brother. She liked to read picture books and some of the pages in newspapers, but did not like comics, novels and magazines.

(4) **Zara:** Zara was one of the first participants I met in my second fieldwork trip. She was nine years old and quite expressive. Her favourite pastimes were social media, arts and crafts, playing games, and listening to music. Zara was chatty and clearly at ease during the interview. She told me about some of the books she had read when she was much younger. She liked to read comedy, comics, crime and investigation books, and adventure books.

(5) **Odachi:** 12 year old Odachi was the oldest participant in my second fieldwork trip. She lived with her aunt and uncle and attended KBC with two young cousins, the children of the relatives she lived with. This was her first time at KBC, but she was well-settled in the book club and appeared to genuinely enjoy all the activities at KBC. I observed that she often had a book in her hand. Although she seemed shy, she was most willing to help me gather data for my study. She had offered to assist in getting her 7 year old cousin to provide data for the study, but I thanked her and declined the offer. Even though I had signed parents' consent forms for both Odachi and her cousin, when I talked with her cousin, he was inconsistent in what things he said, and I became doubtful that he would provide reliable data. Before relocating to the city to live with her aunt and uncle, Odachi had lived with her nuclear family in her village which was in another state. Although she had not always loved reading, in the previous year, she developed a love for books and reading. The times the children were not engaged in some activity, she could be seen poring over a book, quietly reading. She genuinely seemed to love reading.

3.7 Data Analysis

From the already discussed research methods, I obtained data in the form of words, visual images, body language and gestures. Qualitative research is seen as an emerging and iterative process (Stake, 1995), and on data analysis, Simons (2009) advises to “begin at the beginning” (p. 119). This, she argues, is because going through the data may reveal the need to change the questions, or bring up further issues to investigate, or lead to a refining of what notes may have been written for the fieldnotes. Therefore, my approach was to integrate data collection and analysis so that the deductions I made from already collected data informed subsequent data collection. For instance, after the collages were made, I analysed them to know the extent to which each child had read. Similarly, I analysed the completed questionnaires to get a good understanding of each participant’s reading engagement and the factors that affected their leisure reading. This was very helpful as it enabled me to use the interview sessions to get clarification for unclear data that were sourced from other methods. For the interview data, I followed Gillham’s (2000) recommendation and began analysis immediately afterwards while memory and impressions were still fresh. Data from all the methods were used holistically for analysis as discussed below.

3.7.1 Data Preparation

Duplicate copies and back-ups were made of all the data (Bassey, 1999; Denscombe, 2017). Accordingly, I have copies of the collages, completed questionnaires, fieldnotes of my observations, and audio recordings, all of which are stored electronically. For data analysis, I used the back-ups to avoid tampering with or losing the original data. With the help of the Express Scribe Dictation software, I transcribed the audio recording. All the interviews from my two field trips were fully transcribed and I cross-checked the transcripts with the audio files to ensure the transcriptions were accurately done. I typed up the fieldnotes and responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaires, catalogued all the texts, and prepared the data. The data were organized and stored in a manner that helped me to easily code, locate and retrieve them.

3.7.2 Analysis of the Data

The collages were analysed in terms of the activities represented by the colour-coded papers. This involved counting the total number of paper pieces on each collage and the number of each of the different coloured paper pieces on the collage, and then working out the percentage of the collage that each colour represented. In this manner, I worked out what percentage of

his/her leisure time each participant spent on the various activities represented on the collage, and thereby determined the extent to which each participant had engaged in RfP. For instance, if a collage had 100 pieces of paper, and 20 out of the 100 pieces of paper were yellow which represented reading, it meant that the participant had spent a fifth of his/her leisure time on RfP. My analysis of the collages was converted into texts which became part of my report.

To analyse the questionnaire data, I prepared grids that allowed me to enter the data from closed-ended questions. Following that, I calculated the proportion of respondents that answered for each category of each question and used this evaluation in writing up my report. For open-ended questions, I reviewed the responses, categorised them and analysed them thematically in the same way that I analysed the fieldnotes and interview transcripts.

I followed Braun & Clarke's (2006) guide to doing thematic analysis which involved the following steps: (i) familiarising myself with the data, described in 3.7.2 above; (ii) generating initial codes for the data; (iii) searching for themes; (iv) reviewing themes; and (v) defining and naming themes. Accordingly, I repeatedly went through the data to thoroughly familiarize myself with them. I read and re-read the transcripts, and at the same time, added notes to the data and captured ideas by writing them down on memos (Moore, 2000; Simons, 2009). For step (ii), I was concerned with addressing my research questions and hence, in generating the initial codes, I coded every piece of text that appeared relevant to my study. To ensure that I systematically worked through the entire data set and gave full attention to each data item, I broke the data set into smaller units. For instance, the interview data of each participant was a unit and each group interview data made up a unit, too. I carefully went through each unit several times to generate codes. Examples of the codes generated were 'teacher selects books from school library for RfP', 'gets books from friends', and 'reads blogs/websites'. Additionally, I used my research questions to conduct a round of coding and to generate codes that were based on the questions. Accordingly, I had codes such as 'reads cartoons', 'reads to get knowledge', and 'illustrations' etc. As advised by Braun & Clarke (2006), I coded for as many themes as possible and sometimes kept a little of the surrounding data so that the context would not be lost.

For step (iii), after coding across the entire data set, I sorted and collated the different codes into themes and gathered all the data extracts relevant to each theme. I had themes such as 'what they read' 'how they read', 'enabling adult', and 'RfP at Home', etc. Some coded extracts of data fitted into more than one theme. For instance, the code 'father selects books for RfP at

home' fitted into the themes of 'RfP at Home' and 'Choice of Text'. As suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006), I housed codes that did not appear to belong to any of the main themes under a theme titled 'Miscellaneous'. Based on step (iv), I carefully reviewed all the themes and refined them to see how they fitted together. Firstly, I examined the collated data for each theme to see if they formed a coherent pattern, and where a data extract did not fit in, I removed the data and housed them under a theme where they fit. Sometimes, this required creating a new theme for data extracts. Some themes were broad and had subthemes; for example, the theme 'reading aloud' had the subthemes 'reading aloud at home', 'reading aloud at school' and 'reading aloud at KBC'. Thus, I refined each theme to ensure that the data extracts it housed supported the theme. Subsequently, I examined the themes to see if they reflected the meanings evident in the data set, and where necessary, added new codes and/or themes until I was satisfied that I had captured all the relevant data extracts in the themes I created. Cross-case analysis was also done to identify recurring themes as well as note differences in the different data. The themes were reviewed to see what story they told about the data. Finally, following step (v), I defined and named each theme by identifying the essence of the theme and the story it told. I considered how the subthemes related to the main theme, how the themes related to one another, and how they related to my research questions.

3.7.3 Presentation and Display of the Data

After fully working out the themes, I opened a separate document for each of the themes and copied all the data related to the theme to the new document. This enabled me to easily access data related to each theme. Thereafter, I used evidence of the themes within the data to write up my report, embedding extracts of the data within the analytic narrative, and using the evidence from the data to make arguments in relation to my research questions. For example, when looking for evidence on what or why the children read, I turned to their interview and questionnaire data on this theme and found evidence that indicated this.

3.7.4 Validation of the data

Through respondent validation and triangulation, I have checked that my findings are accurate (Creswell, 2009). I cross-checked the data I got from the interviews with the data sourced from the questionnaires, collages and my observations. I also compared the data obtained from the participants with those got from their parents and the staff members of KBC. In my report of the findings, I have addressed the few occasions where I found discrepancies in the data and also written about why they may have arisen.

3.8 Reliability, Validity and Generalizability of Data

The credibility of a research project is judged by how reliable, valid, generalisable and objective it is (Denscombe, 2017). To ensure that my data would be reliable, I used a case study protocol, that is a document with a checklist of all the procedures involved in data collection, to deal with documentation (Yin, 2014) and, specifically, checked transcripts to make sure mistakes were not made during transcriptions. I also checked the data to make sure that there was no drift in the definition of the codes, that is a shift in the meaning of the codes during the process of coding (Creswell, 2009). The multiple sources of evidence discussed in previous sections ensure construct validity (Yin, 2014); in other words, the more the sources of the evidence, the higher the degree to which the evidence supports or contradicts a theory. Respondent validation and triangulation have been used to validate data and their interpretations (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995; Taylor, 2013).

Creswell (2009) and Denscombe (2017) advise against neglecting data that do not fit the analysis. Stake (1995) also asserts that, “one of the important steps in triangulating assertions is the seeking of evidence that contradicts the assertion” (p. 159), a view supported by Yin (2014) who argues that identifying and addressing rival explanations for findings will make the findings stronger. Accordingly, I have been on the look-out for data that do not fit in and have explored them for alternative explanations. My account is holistic, and reports the many perspectives I have seen, and identifies the factors involved. My findings are conveyed through rich and thick descriptions that contextualize the findings, and the researcher’s bias is clarified (Creswell, 2009).

On generalisability, I stated earlier that while the case study is not chosen as a ‘typical’ example (Bassey, 1999), it helps policy makers, practitioners and programme developers to have increased understanding of an issue or programme, and thereby make informed judgements (Simons, 1996). My study does not strive for generalisable findings but aims at shedding light on RfP among a group of 15 children in one part of Nigeria and the factors that affect those children’s engagement with RfP.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

For every research project, there are ethical concerns. For research that involves human participants, the concerns revolve around the topics of informed consent, right to privacy, protection from harm and compliance with the laws of the land (Denscombe, 2017; Simons,

2009). As already stated elsewhere, I carefully and honestly informed all participants and their parents about the research, sought their voluntary consent, and obtained the parents' consent in writing. Pseudonyms have been used for all the participants in order to protect their identity (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015). To further reduce the risk of participants being recognized, the data are presented in a disaggregated way, e.g. interviewees' responses to questions or issues are presented under theme-based headings (Darlington & Scott, 2002), e.g. 'what they read', 'when they read', and 'choice of text'.

The possibility of my research causing physical harm seemed remote; nevertheless, I tried to anticipate and avoid any situation that could cause harm to the participants. More importantly, I was sensitive to participants' needs especially during the interviews, and guarded against being intrusive (Simons, 2009). I was also very careful when controversial topics came up and handled these with tact and sensitivity. My research was guided by a "set of ethical principles and procedures that stem from a democratic ethic underpinned by principles of fairness, justice and equity" (*ibid.*, p. 101), and was carried out in compliance with the laws in Nigeria, the ethics checklist of The British Education Research Association (BERA) (2011; 2018), and the Faculty of Education's ethics conventions. Both in the methods of collecting data, and in my presentation of the data, I have shown "respect for democracy, respect for truth and respect for persons" (Bassey, 1999, p. 73).

3.10 Chapter Summation

In this chapter, I have presented a rationale for the methodology I chose for my study and described and justified the strategies and methods I adopted for data collection. I have also given details of the case (KBC) as well as a brief profile of each of the participants. Additionally, I have discussed the methods of analysis and the ethical dimensions of the study. In the following chapter, I will discuss the findings with regards to my first research question which investigates the extent to which the participants engaged in RfP.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS 1: THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CHILDREN ENGAGE IN READING FOR PLEASURE

4.0 Introduction

As previously stated, my study is guided by three research questions (Section 2.8). In this chapter, I will address the first:

To what extent do 9–12 year olds motivated to attend the Krown Book Club (KBC) in Nigeria, engage in RfP?

Although my study seeks to find out the extent to which this particular group of children read, the participants are all very different and have different reading habits, different experiences with RfP and different attitudes towards reading. Indeed, as Cliff Hodges (2010b) points out, “No two readers are the same” (p. 182). Therefore, in determining the extent to which this group of children reads, it is imperative that I consider each participant as an individual and interpret her/his reading experiences based on the data s/he provides. This approach supports my constructionist epistemological stance and my interpretivist theoretical perspective. Accordingly, I will use findings from each participant’s collage, interview transcript, questionnaire, the questionnaires of the parents, and my observation to assess the extent to which the participants engaged in RfP. I will present the findings using different sub-sections based on the different methods used to gather data.

From the onset of the study, I encouraged the participants to talk about how they had spent their leisure time in the past year, and what they remembered of their reading experiences. As all the participants were children in school who had engaged in academic and non-academic reading, it was important to help them distinguish their readings within these domains and determine when the reading was done purely for the pleasure anticipated, and when it was done in preparation for tests or examinations. When the participants talked about researching online or reading academic texts, I asked them what their motivations for the readings were. I repeatedly explained to them that RfP was the reading they did on their own because they wanted to, and not because they needed to as part of an assignment or in preparation towards an academic assessment (Cremin *et al.*, 2014).

As the semi-structured interviews were conducted following a protocol (Appendix H), the starting points for all the personal interviews were similar, but the questions were not always asked in the same order or way. Moreover, the different responses of the participants threw up

different follow-up questions. I often repeated the respondents' answers to ensure that what I heard was what they said, and to give them a chance to think over, and if need be, alter their answers. All the interviews were audio-recorded and fully transcribed.

Aware that children's reading habits change over time as Cliff Hodges (2010b) highlights, I must point out that the data presented in this study focus on the reading done by the participants in the 12 months leading to the time of the study. It does not indicate the extent to which the participants read in previous years or will read in future. Even from the data presented here, the reading habits of some of the participants have changed over a period of time.

4.1 Evidence from the Collages

Based on the collages, all the participants spent their free time in the past year engaged in different pastimes to varying degrees. Reading featured in all of the collages; however, analysis of the collages indicates that the extent to which the participants engaged in RfP varied from one participant to the other. For instance, the collages of Karen, Adanna and Odachi suggest that they spent a significant amount of their leisure time in the past year on RfP. In Karen's collage (Figure 4.1), reading has 26 of the 123 squares (21 per cent) on the collage. The other activities Karen spent her leisure time on were outdoor sports (15.4 per cent), swimming (12.2 per cent), watching movies (11.4 per cent), hanging out with friends (11.4 per cent), playing video games (8.9 per cent), music (6.5 per cent), dancing (6.5 per cent), arts and crafts (4 per cent), and social media (2.4 per cent).



Figure 4.1: Karen's Collage

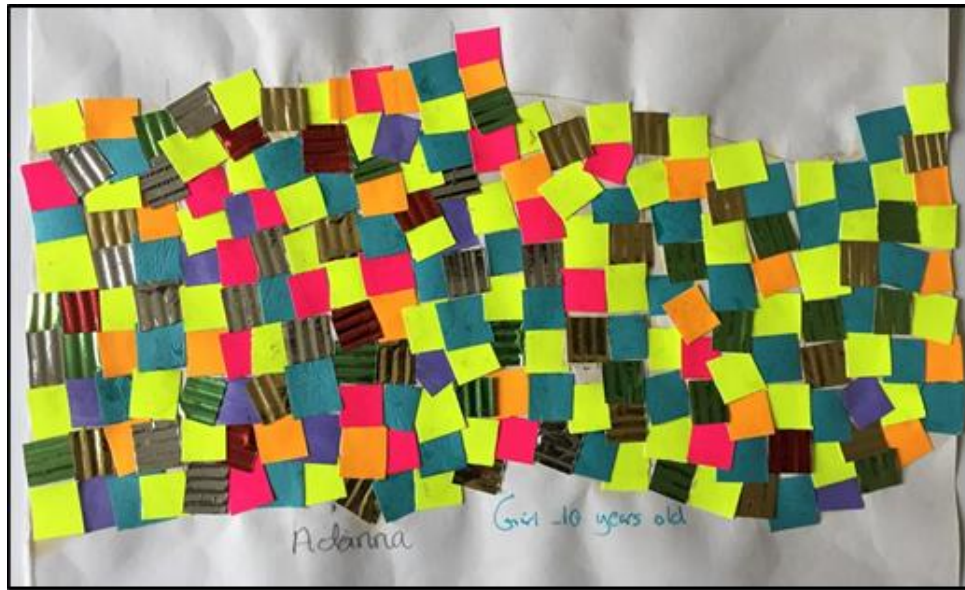


Figure 4.2: Adanna's Collage

Similarly, Adanna's collage (Figure 4.2) indicates that of all the pastimes she engaged in within the past year, she spent the most time on leisure reading. Of the 213 coloured papers she pasted on her collage, the number of yellow papers was 59, indicating that she had spent 27.7 per cent of her leisure time in the past year on reading. The other activities that Adanna spent her leisure time on were swimming (19.2 per cent), hanging out with friends (10.3 per cent), playing video games (9.4 per cent), watching movies (8.9 per cent), music (8.9 per cent), arts & craft (7.0 per cent), social media (5.2 per cent), and outdoor sports (3.3 per cent).

It is worth noticing that not only does reading feature prominently in both Karen's and Adanna's collages, but it features consistently throughout the collages indicating that all-year-round, Karen and Adanna engaged in RfP. Odachi's collage was also very similar to Karen's and Adanna's in the sense that reading was the most prominent activity and featured throughout the collage. Meek (1990) suggests that readers are made when people discover reading to be a worthwhile and satisfying activity. It can then be argued that the afore-mentioned participants who willingly spent a significant portion of their free time on reading are ardent readers who have discovered RfP to be a worthwhile activity. This argument is corroborated by data from their interviews and questionnaires.

Looking across the data in all the collages, most participants appear to read moderately. On a number of collages, reading was evenly spread across the year indicating that there were no sudden spikes in the reading habit of the participants. However, this was not the case for some of the participants. For instance, in Rose's collage (Figure 4.3), reading begins to feature in the

segment that represents the third term of school, and becomes very prominent in the segment that signifies the summer vacation. There are many possible reasons for this. It may be that she was more interested in recreational reading as she got older and could read better. It may also be that her time in KBC nurtured an interest in RfP and led her to read more, or it may be a combination of many factors. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chambers (1991) and Layne (2009) argue that a suitable reading environment influences the reader's experience of reading and could motivate children to read more. Therefore, it seems more plausible that Rose read a lot during the summer vacation because she attended KBC. While this is debatable, based on the evidence from her collage, I argue that she read a lot during the summer period, even though she had not done any reading in the previous part of the year.



Figure 4.3: Rose's Collage

In some other collages, reading features prominently at certain sections and is conspicuously absent in other sections suggesting that while the participant may do a lot of reading during certain periods, it is not an activity that s/he regularly engages in throughout the year.



Figure 4.4: Paul's Collage



Figure 4.5: Mike's Collage

The collages of Paul and Mike (Figures 4.4 and 4.5) suggest that their reading habits vary over a period of time, and while they do much leisure reading during certain periods, at other times they do little or no reading. Mike's collage is particularly striking as it indicates that he read a lot during the term time, but did no leisure reading during the vacation period. This is no coincidence as a chat with Mike revealed that he only enjoyed the leisure reading he did during the school term. He did not enjoy the reading he did during the vacation periods as it was done at his father's behest and involved books chosen by his father, books which Mike described as 'hard'. Choice of text is a major factor in reading motivation for children and children most enjoy reading self-selected texts (Clark & Phythian-Sence, 2008; Gambrell, 1996). In Chapter

6, I will discuss how the assigned reading affected Mike and his motivation to read. However, my argument here is that participants like Paul and Mike who did not do any recreational reading at certain periods often read at other periods. While the collages do not reveal why this was so, data from their interviews suggest the reasons for this may be choice of text.



Figure 4.6: Caleb's Collage

Whereas many of the children read moderately and had reading histories that changed over time, the collage of one child (Figure 4.6), Caleb, indicates that he did very little reading in the year. Of the 61 coloured papers pasted on Caleb's collage, reading had a single square (1.6 per cent), while outdoor sports had 21 squares (34.4 per cent), playing video games/tab had 20 squares (32.8 per cent), hanging out with friends had 7 squares (11.5 per cent), watching movies had 5 squares (8.2 per cent) and music also had 5 squares (8.2 per cent). Social media, arts and crafts and dancing did not feature on Caleb's collage implying that he did not engage in these activities. Reading was not one of Caleb's favourite pastimes, but the evidence from his collage indicates that he did some reading, albeit, very little.

As stated in Chapter 1, there are claims of a decline in reading in Nigeria, and that most children in Nigeria do not read for pleasure (Dapam, 2014; Ilogho, 2015; Nwabudike & Anaso, 2013; Ukoha, 2015). However, based on the evidence from the collages, I argue that it would appear that among the group of 15 students who participated in my study, a number of children read a lot, some children read moderately, and very few children do very little reading. Most of the studies on reading in Nigeria cited in the literature review are based on data gathered only through questionnaires (Ifedili, 2009; Olasehinde *et al.*, 2015; Haliru *et al.*, 2015; Aramide, 2015). Oribabor (2014), also cited in the literature review, employed questionnaires to gather

data from the students and used guided interviews and discussions to collect data from the teachers.

My study employed four different methods for data gathering, one of which was the collage, and therefore it may have been more robust and vigorous than previous studies that had been carried out on reading in Nigeria. The collage was the first method employed for data collection, and at the time the participants made their collages, the focus was not on the extent to which they had read, but on how they had spent their leisure time in the past year. Accordingly, there was no need for the participants to exaggerate the extent to which they had read. Additionally, the findings from the collages are substantiated by findings from both interviews and questionnaires as will be seen in the following sections.

4.2 Evidence from the Interviews

Like the data from the collages, the interview data indicate that the participants had a range of reading engagement and attitudes; some of the children were engaged readers who read a lot, the majority of participants read moderately, and a few read minimally. Some of the participants only read printed materials, but most of them read printed as well as electronic materials, and a few listened to audio books in addition to reading both printed and electronic materials. Many of them discussed with me their favourite books, authors and series, why they preferred these books, and their sources of reading materials. Paul told me about a free website for comics that his older brother had introduced him to.

Most of the participants read three or four days each week, with each reading session lasting for an average of 30 minutes, but a few participants usually spent up to an hour reading, and a few others spent less than 30 minutes reading. Among the 15 children I interviewed, two said they usually read every day and three read once or twice each week. One participant said he hardly read. However, not all of the children seemed to have an idea of how often they read or how long they spent reading when they read. Rose, who said she did not do much reading, could not say how often she read or how long she usually read. Many of the interviewees were quick to state that how long they spent reading was dependent on how engaging they found the reading material to be; if the material was interesting, they would spend a longer time reading, and if not, they read for a shorter period and then put down the material. This resonates with findings from Smith and Wilhelm (2002) which indicate that young readers would only continue reading books that they found engaging.

All the participants said that they did not always read to the end all the reading materials they started, but a few said they usually completed most of the reading materials they took up. Most participants tended to read to the end only about half of the books they picked up, but there were also participants who completed only a few of the books they started. The most common reason for abandoning a book midway was that the book was boring, by which they appear to mean that the book was not interesting and not pleasurable, but there were a few other reasons including the participant not having the time to read the book to the end and the book being too long. For instance, Shehu found lengthy books interesting, but would not read them to the end if they had more than a hundred pages. During the summer vacation period, he read *Horrid Henry*, *Middle School*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. At the time of the interview he had completed *Horrid Henry* and *Diary* but was yet to complete *Middle School* as “it is very big and lengthy.”

Regardless of the fact that many of the participants may not complete some of the books they read, the discussions on completing the books highlight the fact they did start reading the books, and therefore do read for pleasure. Pennac (2006) asserts that a reader has, among other rights, the right not to finish a book and a right to skip pages suggesting that the fact that someone does not finish a book does not imply that s/he is not a reader. In fact, the participants’ decision to stop reading a book when they found it boring or inconvenient to read suggests that the books they read to the end were books they enjoyed reading and that the purpose for the reading was the anticipated pleasure.

4.2.1 More Reading Than They Claim to Do?

Whereas some of the participants, especially boys, said they did not do much reading, data from their interviews suggest that they read much more than they claimed. A good case of this is Charles. Reading was not listed among his favourite pastimes, and data from his collage and questionnaire indicate that he did not usually read in his leisure time. Yet Charles, of his own volition, read his Bible every day, and said he liked reading it as he found it interesting. Charles also had read many popular children’s books and freely discussed these books with me. At the time of the interview, his favourite series were *Goosebumps* and *Encyclopedia Brown*. Clearly, some of the leisure readings he did were not reported in his questionnaire or captured in his collage. Like Charles, Shehu did not include reading as one of his favourite pastimes. When asked if he usually read in his free time, his reply was, “Not really.” However, Shehu had difficulty sleeping most nights and always turned to leisure reading until he fell asleep. Almost

every night, he spent between 30 minutes and an hour reading. When asked why he turned to reading and not another activity, say music, he replied, “Because it’s just peaceful” which I consider to mean that he found reading relaxing and enjoyable. Additionally, while watching videos on YouTube, which he often did, Shehu read the comments on the videos. Evidently, these readings were not reflected in the data from his collage, questionnaire and some parts of his interview.

Based on a study they did on the relationship between achievement in English and the reading habits of 10-14 year old children, earlier referred to in the literature review section, Coles and Hall (2002) argue that “Many boys who in fact read voraciously texts and forms unrecognised by official school curricula see themselves as non-readers” (p. 107). The data from the interviews of Charles and Shehu support Coles and Hall’s (2002) argument. If these boys could say they do not usually read, whereas their data indicate that they regularly read, I wonder how many other young people might be doing much more recreational reading than they realize or claim to do. Findings from Moje *et al.* (2008) demonstrate that sometimes when young readers think of RfP, they think of reading conventionally published print literature and not the reading of magazines, informational texts, digital texts or texts written by other young people, and I argue that perhaps this was the case with Charles and Shehu.

4.2.2 The Connection Between Reading Motivation and the Extent to Which They Read

Analysis of the interview data shows a strong connection and positive relationship between the reading attitudes and motivation of the participants and the extent to which they read. I will use data from Zara and Karen to demonstrate this. Zara described reading as “somehow fun” but added that books without pictures were boring. She did not include reading as one of her favourite pastime activities and her interview excerpts suggest she had an ambivalent attitude towards reading:

IA: Do you usually read in your free time?

Zara: No; only when I’m bored.

IA: During school term how many days in a week do you think you read?

Zara: I’ll say zero cause I don’t have any time.

IA: Okay. Then during the vacation period?

Zara: Maybe three times in a week.

Interestingly, Zara's school had a time set aside weekly for students to do leisure reading and Zara self-selected and read books during this time. She said she enjoyed reading with her friends during the reading time. Hence, her claims that she did no leisure reading during the term suggests that she may not associate the reading she did during the school reading time with RfP, perhaps because it was at the behest of her teacher or the school authority. This may explain also why she did not look forward to the reading period:

IA: ... So you look forward to the time you have Mathematics on the timetable?

Zara: Yes.

IA: Do you also look forward to the reading time?

Zara: Hmmm, not really...I don't really have an idea why.

However, Zara's collage and questionnaire indicate that she read moderately. Unlike Zara, Karen had a very positive attitude towards reading:

IA: How do you feel when you are reading a book?

Karen: I feel like I go into another dimension, another world of exploring and adventures....It makes me feel like I'm in dimension 5...It's like a book that I just jump into and I'm so excited to read it.

IA: If you start reading a book and you don't find it as exciting as you thought it would be, what do you then do?

Karen: I just continue and I try to make up my own ways to read that book so that it can be interesting.... Like if the book says, "One day, I went to the park and I saw a tree", I would make it, "One day, I went to the American park and I saw a beautiful tree with purple leaves. And then after that tree, there were some swings on the branches. I love the swings because they always swing so high it feels like I'm flying."

Karen's collage and questionnaire reveal that reading was her favourite pastime and that she spent a significant portion of her leisure time on RfP both during the school term and the holidays. Cremin (2007) highlights that RfP is about the reader finding personal meaning and purpose, making connections with the text and engaging emotionally with it. Karen's responses suggest that she may have found personal meaning and purpose in reading and is an ardent reader.

Data from Zara and Karen are supported by findings from Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) who identify motivation as a key factor in students' reading. According to Guthrie *et al.* (2004) and Cox and Guthrie (2001), engaged readers see reading as a worthwhile activity and are motivated to read widely and frequently. This motivation which is intrinsic in nature is prompted by personal interest in reading, a great sense of enjoyment in reading and reading

efficacy. This is different from extrinsic motivation where the reader's motivation to read is controlled by social demands and rewards such as good grades, avoidance of punishment and recognition from others (Wang & Guthrie, 2004). It does not appear that Zara is an engaged or motivated reader as she did not see it as a worthwhile activity to actively pursue in her free time. Karen, on the other hand, is an engaged reader who enjoys reading. Either way, the data suggest that motivation or seeing reading as worthwhile are strongly connected to the extent to which some participants read.

4.2.3 Experiences of Book Re-Readings

The theme of experiencing a book differently when re-reading it appeared in the data of some of the participants. Shehu claimed that when he re-read a book, he experienced the book differently. Peter also shared the same view as Shehu, and when asked about the experience of reading a book a second time, he replied thus:

Peter: Yes, I've said this to my brother... that most people when they read a book first...they just read it for the fun of it, then they now come and read it again, to understand the book.

Both Shehu's and Peter's varying experiences of the same book appear to support Rosenblatt's (1978/1994) theory that if a specific reader reads the same text at a different time, s/he will experience the text differently from how s/he previously experienced the text. Rose, Zara and Odachi opined differently, though. Odachi and Rose said that when they re-read a book, their experiences of the book did not differ from how they experienced it the first time they read it. However, both participants said they sometimes re-read books they liked and found interesting. When asked to describe her experience when re-reading a book, Zara had this to say:

Zara: Boring, cause the first time when you are reading it, you will know that you have never read it so you'll be eager to read it, but... the second time when you read it, you already know what is going to happen so there's no use of reading it again.

IA: So, when you read it a second time, do you experience it in a different way?

Zara: No...It's still the same way to me.

Zara's responses suggest that she did not re-read even the books she liked. However, it also implies that she had read certain books at least once, which indicates that she did some leisure reading. There is also the possibility that she may have attempted to re-read a book as she responded that she had the same experience when reading a book a second time. My argument is that regardless of whether Zara or the other participants had the same or different experiences when re-reading a book, a discussion on the experience of re-reading alludes to the fact that they read.

4.2.4 Fiction and the Imagination

Another note-worthy theme that emerged from the interviews is the influence of literature on the imagination. Peter alleged that reading fiction expanded his imagination. Paul also made the same allusion:

Paul: I like reading novels, comics. I also like reading messages I receive....

IA: Picture books?

Paul: Well, picture books, I can see the pictures so it doesn't really expand my imagination, so I don't like reading picture books.

Peter and Paul were not the only participants who talked about reading having an effect on their imagination. While seeking to express his thoughts on reading, Charles repeatedly linked reading fiction with imagination:

Charles: I think reading is interesting, but depends on what you're reading...but sometimes you read fiction which is good because it shows how good your imagination is...

IA: So, which one do you prefer? Fiction or non-fiction?

Charles: I definitely prefer fiction...Because fiction is very interesting. It's, like your imagination.... what you can imagine because your brain is very powerful, and it's really nice for people to be able to see what you can come up with in your imagination...

While the comments by Peter, Paul and Charles do not provide evidence that their imaginations were stimulated by the fiction they read, they seem to support the argument that reading fiction could stir the imagination (Cliff Hodges, 2010a; Pihl & Kooij, 2016). Either way, they provide evidence that these participants regularly read for pleasure.

4.2.5 Other Salient Issues

Although the interview questions were focused on the reading habits of the participants, in the course of answering a question during his interview, Charles mentioned that he wrote stories. He narrated to me one of the stories:

Charles: I wrote a story about me sky diving which was fiction...

There were similar threads that ran through his story and some of the stories/books he had read. This is not altogether surprising as evidence suggests that some children adopt the writing styles and themes found in the texts that they like (Barrs & Cork, 2001; Parry & Taylor, 2018). Perhaps Charles' writings were influenced by his favourite books and authors.

By contrast, in his interview, Caleb sometimes gave contradictory responses. At the start of his interview, he listed reading, outdoor sports, playing video games and watching movies as his leisure time activities. However, as the interview progressed, he stated that he did not do any reading on his own nor during his free time, and neither did he read at home.

IA: Do you get to read a lot at school?

Caleb: Yes... It's something I do with my friends and when the teacher says so...

IA: Okay, and do you like reading with your friends?

Caleb: Yes.

IA: Ok, whose idea is it that you should read together?

Caleb: No, I don't usually read with my friends.

IA: ...So in school you read on your own?

Caleb: Yes.

IA: Ok. And you do you like reading on your own in school?

Caleb: No.

I conducted the interview with Caleb shortly after a group interview during which he was largely silent apart from the times I directly posed a question to him. I observed that in his personal interview, a few times, he tried to repeat some of the responses that had been given by other participants during the group interview. On these occasions, when I repeated the questions or sought for clarification, he either remained silent or gave contradictory responses. It appears that Caleb's initial responses were sometimes influenced by the responses he had heard other participants give during the group interviews, responses which he may have believed were what the interviewer expected; this is a limitation of group interviews (Moore, 2000). As the interview went on, he became more confident in giving answers that honestly reflected his own opinion and experiences. When I asked him questions about his reading preferences, where he got reading materials, and why he read the books he read, and who read to him at home, he gave responses that I consider to be wholly his:

IA.: Do you like novels?

Caleb: No.

IA.: ...Why do you like picture books and comics?

Caleb: Because it is filled with lots of adventures..

4.3 Evidence from the Participants' Questionnaires

On the questionnaires, the majority of participants indicated that reading was one of the activities they spent their leisure time on, and many of them said that they regularly read books, magazines, comics and newspapers. The responses in the questionnaires showed that most of the participants read on two to four days each week, and on average, spent about 30 minutes reading each time they read. Three participants indicated that they read every day, while one

participant indicated that he did not do any leisure reading. However, a few of the participants who listed reading as one of their pastimes said that they did not regularly read any books, magazines, comics or newspapers; I have written more about this later in this sub-section.

Many of the participants listed several books they had recently read and indicated that they had read most of the books to the end. At the time of the study, Karen and Onome had recently read and completed seven different storybooks, Adanna had completed six out of the seven books she recently read, and Odachi and Zara had read and completed five books and four books respectively. Shehu, Mike, Paul and Rose also wrote down the titles of books they had recently read even though they had not read most of the books to the end.

Some of the books the children listed that they had recently read are Lesley Sims' *How Zebras Got Their Stripes* (2009), Mairi Mackinnon's *The Sun and The Wind* (2007), a children's version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (2012), *King Midas and the Golden Touch* (1989), *The Frog Prince* (2012), *Hansel and Gretel* (2005), *Aesop's Fables* (2003), *African Myths and Legends* (1990), *Bat Man* (1940–2016), *Iron Man* (1968–2014), *Super Man* (1987–2006), Ben Carson's *Think Big* (1996), Stephen D Smith's *Rivals on the Waves* (2005), John Maxwell's *Becoming a Person of Influence* (2012), Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (1974), a children's version of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (2003), Stephen D. Smith's *High Hurdles* (2005), Liane Payne's *Warren and the Great Carrot Race* (2005), G. M. Berrow's *Pinkie Pie and the Rockin' Pony Party* (2014), the following books by Geronimo Stilton: *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* (2004), *Secret Agent* (2008), *I'm Too Fond of My Fur* (2004), and books in the following series: Enid Blyton's *Secret Seven* (1949 – 1963) and *Famous Five* (1942 – 1962), Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry* (1994 – 2015), James Patterson's *Middle School* (2011 – 2015), Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (2007 – 2017), Jerry B. Jenkins & Tim F. LaHaye's *Left Behind* (1995 – 2007). The fact that most of the listed authors are foreign, that is, they are not Nigerian, may be because there are relatively few Nigerian writers and these few mostly write for adults. However, it is evident from the titles that these young readers read a range of titles from different genres of books. Accordingly, parents and schools should take this into consideration when providing materials for children's leisure reading.

A few participants like Peter and Charles did not list any material that they had recently read. This may be because the question was a follow up to the question on how regularly they read, and since Peter and Charles indicated they did not read regularly, they refrained from writing down any books they may have recently read. It is unlikely that they had not read any book or

reading material as they, like other participants, usually read during the reading period at KBC. Their response may have been a reference to what reading they did outside KBC.

In Section 4.2.5, I pointed out that the interview data for one participant were incongruous. I had a similar challenge with the questionnaire data of a few of the participants as their responses were sometimes inconsistent. For instance, Chidi, Charles and Jide indicated that they did not regularly read any books, magazines, comics or newspapers, but they all included reading as one of their favourite pastimes and stated that they read three times weekly for an average of 30 minutes. On the other hand, Caleb claimed that he did a lot of reading every day, and regularly read books, comics, magazines and newspapers. However, he did not include reading as one of the activities he spent his leisure time on, and when asked to list the titles of the materials he had recently read, he did not write the title of any book or reading material.

Maybe at the time of my study, Caleb, like Karnail in Fry (1985) mentioned in Section 2.5, was an inexperienced reader who was yet to find a book that would make reading easy and pleasurable for him. I suspect that in completing his questionnaire, Caleb might have sometimes put down answers he believed were ‘correct’, a limitation of questionnaires (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992). I tend to hold this view as data from his collage and interview showed that he did very little reading in the past year.

With regards to the inconsistency in the data of Chidi, Charles and Jide, I am of the opinion that the boys may have interpreted ‘regularly’ to mean ‘daily’, hence their negative response to the question on reading regularly. I hold this view because in Nigeria, there appears to be a commonly held belief that ardent readers must read daily and during what free time they have. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) indicate that boys tend to provide lower estimations of how much they read, and “significantly more boys than girls declare themselves ‘nonreaders’” (p. 10). As previously stated, Moje *et al.* (2008) suggest that when some youths think of RfP, they only think of reading literature and do not think of other reading materials like comics and newspapers. These findings from Smith and Wilhelm (2002) and Moje *et al.* (2008) may explain the inconsistency in the data of Chidi, Charles and Jide. There is also the likelihood that in responding to this question, any or all of the boys may have considered the fact that he did not regularly read all of the materials mentioned (i.e. books, comics, magazines, newspapers), and therefore decided to give a negative response to the question. The probability of this is high as Charles indicated that he never read magazines and newspapers, and Jide and Chidi ticked that they sometimes read newspapers but hardly read magazines.

There is also the possibility that the responses may not have been well-thought out. As stated in Chapter 3, Moore (2000) asserts that people tend to fill in questionnaires quickly with an immediate response and not a well-thought out or detailed response. Although my primary purpose for using observation was to look at how much the KBC environment contributed to nurturing the children's interest in reading, I observed that Chidi and Jide appeared to be constantly reading one book or another. Also, from the discussions the participants had about books they had read, I picked up that both Chidi and Jide had read many of the popular books the children discussed. For these reasons, I am of the view that they did regularly read for pleasure.

What emerges from the questionnaires is that all the participants read for pleasure, but the extent to which they read varies. Some participants read every day, others read most days, and a few read once or twice weekly. Also, the times the participants spend reading differ. Most of the children read for about 30 minutes each time they read, a few read for a longer period, and some read for a much shorter time than 30 minutes. However, as previously stated, all the children engaged in RfP though to varying degrees.

4.4 Evidence from the Parents' Questionnaires

From the responses in their questionnaires, most parents believed that their child enjoyed reading. The reasons for this belief are many but the most prominent are that the child usually carried a book about, and that the child discussed with the parents the book s/he was reading. One parent wrote that her child sometimes enjoyed reading; she based her opinion on the fact that her child usually showed reluctance to read but when encouraged, he read and enjoyed the book. Another parent was unsure if her child enjoyed reading, and a few parents were of the opinion that their child did not enjoy reading and preferred to watch TV.

When asked if their child regularly read, about half of the parents replied in the affirmative, a few gave a negative response, and the other parents gave no response. To the question, "Do you think your child reads enough?", all but one of the parents replied, "No". The one parent who responded affirmatively wrote, "Yes, but I would like her to improve even more" suggesting that though she believed the child read enough, she was not satisfied with the extent to which the child read. The parents' responses seem to fit into my earlier discussion about some Nigerian researchers' perception that young people hardly read for pleasure and are not engaged readers (Ilogho, 2015; Nwabudike & Anaso, 2013; Ukoha, 2015).

Although some of the participants believed that they did not read enough, a number of them held a contrary opinion from their parents' on whether they read regularly and on how frequently they read. Chidi and Jide indicated in their questionnaires that they read thrice weekly, but their mother wrote that they read once a week. Shehu's interview data indicated that he regularly read especially in the nights when he could not sleep, but his mother filled in that he did no reading. Similarly, Charles indicated that he read thrice weekly, but his mother said he read once a week. In almost all the cases, it appeared that the parents' estimation of the extent to which the children read was significantly lower than the participants' estimation of the extent to which they read.

The discrepancies between the data from the parents' questionnaires and those from the participants' were not limited to the extent to which the participants read. There were cases when the child believed that s/he read enough but the parents indicated otherwise. For instance, Odachi's aunt whom she lived with and who completed the parents' questionnaire for Odachi, seemed ignorant of the fact that Odachi did much reading. She wrote that Odachi did not read enough and preferred to watch TV, a view that Odachi did not share. Odachi believed she read enough and the data sourced from her suggest that she spent much time reading. Like Odachi, Karen's collage, questionnaire and interview all indicate that she read a lot. Yet, Karen's mother seemed unaware of Karen's reading habits. In her questionnaire, Karen's mother wrote that she was not sure that Karen enjoyed reading and that Karen did not read regularly. However, Karen's mother also stated that she had not paid attention to Karen's reading, and neither read nor discussed books with Karen which may well explain the discrepancies between the data provided by Karen's mother and the data sourced from Karen.

Odachi's and Karen's are not the only examples where the data from the parents sharply differed from the data sourced from the participant. Even though findings from Caleb's data suggest otherwise, Caleb's mother stated that he enjoyed reading. She claimed that he regularly read magazines, books, comics and newspapers on Saturdays. However, Caleb stated in his questionnaire that he never read magazines and newspapers. Also, the responses given by Caleb's mother on the types of books he liked to read were very different from the answers Caleb gave. It therefore appears that Caleb's mother may not be aware of his reading habits and preferences. It is also possible that Caleb's mother may have exaggerated how much reading he did, as she may have feared that his image as a nonreader would reflect poorly on the family. The possibility also exists that either Caleb or his mother may have been influenced

by the researcher and thus may have given such answers as s/he thought the researcher would like to have.

From the data I have presented and discussed here, the argument seems to be that the children seem to have one view on the extent to which they read while their parents have a conflicting view. A possible explanation for the disparity may be that in looking at the extent to which their children read, many parents may not consider reading that involves materials such as electronic books, WhatsApp messages, and comics which incidentally are very popular among the boys who participated in my study. Wilhelm (2008) cited in Section 2.6.2 also suggests that there is likelihood that young people who read may not be identified as readers, possibly because they may not be overtly literate in ways that are most visible and valued in school. It is also possible that when parents say children do not read enough, their claims are based on academic performances and academic reading, rather than on how much leisure reading the children do. Chong (2016), previously mentioned in Chapter 2, argues that it is possible that a student who is not doing much required reading may be doing a great deal of personal choice reading, and vice versa. Therefore, if the parent's view of how much reading the child does is based on academic reading, it may likely give an inaccurate picture of how much recreational reading the child has done. Another reason may be that the literary activities of many children may not be obvious to their parents as reading is a personal and private experience. The above explanations may account for the divergence in the data sourced from the parents.

4.5 Evidence from KBC Staff Members' Questionnaires

In their responses on the questionnaire, the Staff of KBC stated that the KBC children enjoyed reading based on their observation of the children reading even in their free time. They also wrote that most of the children borrowed books and when returning them discussed the books and showed interest in borrowing either similar books or books by the same author. According to the staff members, books frequently borrowed and discussed included the Ladybird Classics, retold narrative versions of Shakespeare's works and books authored by Geronimo Stilton. It may be argued that the fact that the staff members observed the children 'reading' in their free time is no proof that the children were actually reading as reading is elusive by nature (Cliff Hodges, 2010b). Also, borrowing books does not confirm that the children read the books. However, there were other activities that the children could have engaged in during their free time hence their decision to read or be with books suggests genuine interest in reading and/or books. Moreover, as mentioned in Section 4.3, on a few occasions, I witnessed when staff

members caught Chidi and Jide reading while another activity was ongoing. It could be said that the boys may have been bored at the time hence their decision to read, but it appeared that they continued reading because they deeply enjoyed the books and were unwilling to put them down, even if momentarily. Additionally, the books that the staff members reported that the children borrowed were among the books that most of the children read going by the participants' data on what they read. In view of this, most, if not all the children, may have read the books they borrowed. Although the data from the staff members do not show the extent to which the children read, they provide evidence of their engagement with leisure reading.

4.6 Chapter Summation

In this chapter, I discussed my findings with regard to my first research question which investigated the extent to which the 9–12 year olds who were motivated to attend KBC engaged in RfP. Based on my interpretivist theoretical stance, I analysed the data from the children's collages, my observation, the participants' questionnaires and interviews, and accordingly constructed meaning of the extent to which the participants engaged in leisure reading. The data suggest that the participants' level of engagement with RfP differed. In the following chapter, I will use the findings from the data to answer my second research question.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS 2: HOW, WHAT, WHEN AND WHY THE 9–12 YEAR OLDS AT KBC READ

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I will address the second research question which is:

How, what, when and why do the 9–12 year olds in KBC read when they read, both within the book club and beyond the book club?

As I stated in the introduction, the popular belief is that Nigerian children do not read for pleasure; indeed, the poor academic achievement of children in Nigeria is often linked to the absence of a reading culture. However, as indicated in Chapter 4, the participants of this study do read, even though some of the parents think differently. This chapter aims to offer analyses of how these young readers read, what they read, when and why they read both within and outside the book club. My goal in doing this is to explore the range of interests and needs of these readers in more depth, and what motivates their reading practices. However, this is a case study with a very small sample of 15 children and cannot be generalised. As I already mentioned in Chapter 3, Simons (1996) argues that through case studies, policy makers, practitioners and programme developers can get multiple perspectives and have increased understanding of an issue or programme, and thereby make informed judgements. Therefore, what I shall do is provide evidence which is intended to help people broaden their perspectives on how children in Nigeria read. To address the second research question, I will look to the data from the interviews, observations and questionnaires.

5.1 How the 9–12 Year Olds at KBC Read

Before I look into the data for how the 9–12 year olds at KBC read, I would like to first state what I mean by *how they read*. By ‘how they read’, I mean two things: (1) in what manner or way they read. For example, when these children read for pleasure, do they read alone? Do they do shared reading with friends? If they do shared readings, do they prefer this to the silent reading they do alone? (2) The media through which they read. Do these children read only physical or printed materials? Do they read electronically, or do they read physical and printed materials as well? Also, do these children listen to audio books? What are their preferences? Does the medium through which they read in any way affect their motivation to read? These are the questions that I will address in this section.

5.1.1 Silent Reading, Shared Readings and Reading Aloud

I observed that during the reading period, the children quietly read on their own. Everyone was encouraged to select a book from the shelf, sit and read alone. Shared reading, an interactive reading experience that occurs when a group of people take turns in reading aloud a book or text, was not discouraged or frowned upon during the reading time, but it was also not suggested or encouraged by anyone throughout the period I was at KBC.

During the reading period, the young readers read silently, although occasionally, one of the readers could ask another reader a question such as the title of the book s/he was reading or what the book was about. The children sometimes wrote down in notebooks the new words they came across in the books they read. This was because in a later session, they were asked by a staff member to mention the new words they had come across while reading, and to give a summary of the book(s) they had read. The words they wrote down came in handy in this later session, during which the meaning and use of the new words learned were discussed. The children did not appear to mind having to repeatedly pause their reading to write down new words, but the task of being on the lookout for new words and writing down the words slowed down the reading, momentarily took their focus off the story, and possibly detracted from the pleasure of reading.

Sometimes, a few children were so engrossed in the book they were reading that they read page after page without writing down any word in their notebooks. The fact that they did not write down new words whenever they were deeply engrossed in reading suggests to me that they found reading more enjoyable and captivating when they did not have to pause and write down new words. One of the benefits of RfP is vocabulary development. However, the vocabulary development happens as readers use verbal contexts to deduce the meanings of unknown words, rather than through the reader picking out words and learning their meanings (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991). Hence, even if children do not write down the new words they come across while reading, their vocabulary will still broaden as they read. I therefore argue that the task of writing down new words while reading may have more drawbacks than rewards, as it makes the children less engaged in reading.

Most of the children appeared genuinely interested in what they were reading even though they occasionally paused and looked either at the door, or through the window, or at the staircase when someone was either going up or down it. However, there were times when someone got distracted by the things that were happening in the environment. The reading space overlooked

the entrance of the yard, and when there was power outage, the doors of the room were kept wide open to let in air as the temperature of the room was warm. It was therefore easy for the children to see what was happening in the yard. Occasionally, a car drove into the yard to drop an attendee who was late. When this happened, one or two children looked up from the book they were reading and turned to look outside. After a minute or two, they returned to reading their book. Sometimes, the child lingered on looking at the outside scene for a while before returning to reading.

Many children were so deeply immersed in the books they read that they were not distracted by anything happening inside or outside the room. However, not all of the children were so engrossed in reading. Ngozi appeared distracted most of the time. She was listless and rarely seemed to focus on reading any particular book. Some days, she quickly flipped through books, returned them to the shelf, and picked up another book to read. There were also times that she appeared really engrossed in reading, but I had the impression that most of the time she read, it was because everyone was encouraged to read during the reading period.

Sometimes, after reading silently for a while, the children discussed the books they had read with one another. Chidi and Jide often shared their books and stories with each other. So did Charles and Paul. It was not uncommon to see the children asking what book someone was reading. If it turned out that they had read the book or something similar, they shared stories about the book. From listening in on these conversations, I learned that Chidi and Jide had read many of the books that were popular among the boys in this group. It was not uncommon for the children to read the books they liked again and again. On one occasion, I saw Mike with a book which he told me he was reading for the seventh time. About a third of the boys in Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) study indicated that they enjoyed repeated readings of their favourite texts. Smith and Wilhelm suggest that the repeated readings were a way for the boys to sustain engagement with texts they enjoyed and characters they had come to care about. This may explain why Mike repeatedly read the book previously mentioned. Alternatively, it may also be that he repeatedly re-read it because it was an easy book to read, or it provided him with new words to learn.

It was not only during the reading period that the children at KBC read. Some of the children continued reading even when the reading period was over. On one occasion, one of them gave the excuse that the book he was reading was 'too interesting'. I believe that he meant that the book was captivating, which may explain why he was unwilling to put it down until he had

read it to the end. It may also be that he was not interested in the group activity that was going on at the time and needed an excuse for why he was reading rather than taking part in the group activity. To avoid getting into trouble, Chidi and Jide sometimes hid the books they were reading underneath the table and bent their heads low to read, but this did not go unnoticed, and they were sternly rebuked for this, and encouraged to pay attention to the activity at hand. Their attitude towards reading suggests that they were engaged readers who found it a worthwhile activity.

In addition to the time when the children silently read on their own, there were periods when a staff member read aloud to the children and there were also periods when the children took turns in reading aloud a book to everyone in the room. During the read aloud periods, the shared reading was at a staff member's insistence, and the staff member usually selected the book and chose which child would read at each point in time. Many of the children were eager to be called to read aloud to the other children. They usually indicated that they would like to read by raising their hand, and then the staff member would call upon one of them to come out and read to the other children.

To ensure that every child got a chance to read, the staff member would call on a child to read a few pages and then pass on the book to another child to read the next few pages. While this practice had the advantage of helping the children to acquire the skill of reading aloud clearly and expressively, the enjoyment of the story may have been diminished when the story was read by less skilful readers as I observed that when less proficient readers read, some children lost interest in listening to the story and turned their attention to something else. For instance, on a particular occasion, while Ngozi was reading to everyone, Jide and Chidi began to read the books in their possession. It may be that Jide and Chidi did not enjoy the story when Ngozi read. It may also be that they found the book they were reading more interesting than the book chosen for the shared reading. It is possible that shared reading might be more interesting if each child is given no more than a page to read, and if the adults organized it in such a way that a less proficient reader takes the turn of reading between skilled readers. Shared reading stirs interest in reading (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). However, as discussed in Section 2.5.2, the book selected for the reading is important (Layne, 2015), and if the readers do not find the book engaging, it may be difficult for them to become absorbed in the reading and they may lose interest in listening to it.

Whilst the staff-directed shared reading period did not take place on a daily basis, reading aloud by a staff member was a daily activity. The purposes of the reading aloud sessions by a staff member were twofold: (i) to help the children develop interest in reading (ii) to get them to learn new words, which tied in with Gordon's (2018) beliefs about the purpose of shared reading. Layne's (2015) research into reading aloud indicates that the practice fosters in children an interest in reading, and findings from my study support this:

IA: Ok. How often do they read aloud to you here?

Odachi: It's mostly like every day...

IA: Does it make you eager to read the story again?

Odachi: Yes. If it's interesting, I don't mind if I read it over and over again.... Yeah, if the story is interesting, I would go and complete the book or I would borrow it home and complete it.

IA: ...Would it (being read to) make you want to read the book?

Charles: Yes, I think so. Like Auntie Ese, the books she reads to us, it seems really interesting. I would want to read the book.

IA: And how do you feel when people read books aloud to you? Do you like it?

Karen: Yes.

IA: You enjoy it?

Karen: Yes, because some words that I don't know, they might say it out loud and they might now tell me the meaning, but if I'm reading it on my own, I'll just look at that word, assume I know it and just pass it, and from then on, I won't know the word again.

In Nigeria, children and even adults usually address anyone who is a few years older than them as 'Auntie' or 'Uncle'. Therefore, the children addressed Ese, the director of KBC as 'Auntie Ese'. The staff members were Auntie Lizzy and Auntie Ugo. Charles' comment suggests that it was not only the action of reading aloud that got him interested in further reading the books; the content of the books mattered to him, too. What more, it appeared that he trusted Ese's book choices which may imply that Ese chose books he liked. Charles' comment backs Layne's (2015) argument on the importance of selecting appropriate texts.

Karen's comments suggest that some children may like reading aloud for reasons other than the pleasure it gave. For instance, though Karen enjoyed it, she also welcomed it for the opportunity it gave her to learn new words. It was common to have a staff member pause when she came across a word she assumed the children did not know. She would ask for the meaning of the word and when no child could rightly answer, would give the meaning of the word and use the word in a few sentences so that the children would get the meaning of the word and

know its usage. Layne (2015) lists the broadening of the vocabulary as one of the benefits of reading aloud, and Karen provides evidence in support of this, even though in this case this involved interrupting the flow of the narrative to teach new vocabulary. However, Karen's enjoyment indicates that the benefit of helping children to like reading may not have been totally lost; perhaps the interruptions were infrequent and at appropriate intervals. The discussed excerpts from Odachi's, Charles' and Karen's interviews indicate that the purposes of the reading aloud sessions at KBC were achieved in some of the children.

At the end of the reading aloud, the staff member who had read to the children asked questions from the book, and the children were required to answer the questions. Although the children always answered the questions the staff members asked, in the group interviews, they revealed that they did not like being asked questions after the reading aloud. This finding supports Pennac's (2006) assertion that when demands are made of a child, the child loses pleasure in reading. Earlier, Nell (1988) had written that RfP should be completely response-free as the delight of reading will be diminished if the reader is required to account for passages or make responses to the reading. In Chapter 6, I will discuss how the questions asked by staff members after a reading aloud session affected the young readers' engagement with reading.

Books read by the staff members included popular classics, and books like *Math Rashes and Other Classroom Tales* by Douglas Evans and *Titanic* by Anna Claybourne. The books chosen by the staff members for reading aloud were usually books with colourful illustrations, and they often displayed the illustrations to the children. The children showed interest in the illustrations and the illustrations generated more interest in the texts and seemed to help the children to follow and better enjoy the stories. In Section 5.2.6, I will discuss more about the impact of illustrations on the participants' reading engagement.

For the majority of participants, reading aloud was only experienced at KBC. However, this was not the case for a few of the children. The school teachers of Mike, Zara and Rose read aloud to the children in their classes, and in the case of Rose, this was done every day. Although Zara enjoyed listening to her teacher read aloud to the class, she was undecided about whether she preferred this to the silent reading she did on her own.

IA: Which one do you prefer, when the teacher reads aloud to you or when you read by yourself?

Zara: Hmmm, I don't really know because I think I like both of them.

Zara's response indicates that some children may enjoy different literary activities and may benefit from regular exposure to different literary practices.

Although Rose's father and Charles's mother indicated that they or someone in the family sometimes read aloud to their child, both Rose and Charles claimed that no-one at home read aloud to them. In a similar vein, contrary to Ngozi's claim that her sister read aloud to her, her sister who completed the parents' questionnaire on behalf of their parents, said that no-one read aloud to Ngozi, but that she (the sister) and the parents had book discussions with Ngozi. Reading aloud involves reading out a text with or without a discussion of the text whereas book discussions refer to conversations centred on a book. In her interview, Rose had mentioned that she sometimes read some of the pages in the newspapers her father bought. Perhaps her father occasionally discussed with her what she read in the newspapers, and based on this, indicated that he read aloud to her. It may also be that he was embarrassed to admit that neither he nor anyone at home read aloud to Rose. In the case of Charles, I suspect that his mother may have responded as she did because she had regularly read to him when he was younger and still had regular book discussions with him. These snippets of evidence suggest that outside KBC, some of the young readers in my study may not have social networks that strongly encourage and foster a love for reading.

A few participants attended schools where a particular period on the time-table was set aside for reading, and children were encouraged to read self-selected books during these periods. Mike and Zara said that they sometimes engaged in shared readings with their friends during the school reading period and enjoyed it. Zara offers some reasons why:

IA: Do you get to share books or read together with your friends?

Zara: If you want to.

IA: Which one do you personally prefer?

Zara: Reading with my friends... Well, you know when you are reading alone, there can be a lot of noises...they will start making noise so the words will start scrambling up in your brain, but when you are with your friends, you have to read aloud so that everyone will hear it together.

The findings from Mike and Zara reveal that schools can support and nurture children's interest in reading by creating time for leisure reading. Studies on literacy achievement and reading demonstrate that one of the things schools can do to help children develop into readers is create opportunities for them to read in school by setting aside time for independent reading, shared reading, and reading aloud (Gordons, 2018; Francois, 2015; Westbrook, 2013).

5.1.2 Book Discussions

The participants often discussed together what books they had read. This was more common among the boys than the girls. However, in my first fieldwork trip, six out of the ten participants were boys. Also, most of the boys were about the same age, and appeared to have similar tastes and interests in books. The boys often discussed together the books they were either reading or had read, but book discussions among the girls were not common. Perhaps this was because of the difference in their ages, (Karen was 7, Onome was 12 while Adanna and Ngozi were 10) which may have resulted in them having interest in different books. Moje *et al.* (2008) indicate that there are variances in how much reading children in grades 7, 9 and 10 do, even though the analysis of what the children in Moje *et al.*'s study read does not reveal if there are differences in the types of books they read. Not all of my participants discussed with me the books they had read when they were younger, but the few who did claimed that as they got older, they read more mature books. One such participant was Zara who told me that her favourite books when she was younger were *Tom and the Cat* and *Pop, Pop, Pop*.

IA: Okay; what books are you reading now? Are they different from *Tom and the Cat* and *Pop, Pop, Pop*?

Zara: Yes, they are more mature.

By 'mature', Zara appears to mean more advanced as she added that unlike when she was little and only read picture books like *Tom and the Cat*, she now read novels.

Book discussions were not limited to the time at KBC. Ten of the 15 children indicated that they regularly discussed the books they had read with family members and friends outside KBC. Charles, Karen, Zara, Caleb and Onome discussed the books they read principally with their mothers, and sometimes, other family members. Zara also discussed books with a private lesson teacher she had. Chidi and Jide discussed books with each other, while Ngozi discussed with her siblings, and Adanna with her friends. The fact that book discussions with friends and family members featured prominently in many participants' lives supports Moje *et al.*'s (2008) findings that social networks play a major role in motivating young readers in their literary activities. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) also provide evidence that family, friendships and significant others powerfully influence literate behaviour of young readers. Data from my study support both Moje *et al.*'s (2008) and Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) findings and suggest that perhaps some children might be more engaged readers if they had social networks that support RfP.

Most of the children did not give details of what they talked about when they discussed books with their friends and family members, but Peter who did, had this to say about the book discussions he sometimes had with his brother:

Peter: If it's like a scary book, we discuss on the parts that are really scary; that really scares us. If it's like an action book, we discuss on how those people got their powers or how they fought. If it's a fantasy book which we normally read...comic fantasy books so we discuss on how they got their powers, how they used their powers, and how they finished the book.

IA: When your brother reads a book and discusses it with you, does it make you eager to read the book?

Peter: Yes.

Peter's description of the book discussions with his brother suggests to me that Peter and his brother were deeply engaged in the books they read, so much so that their emotions were affected by the things that went on in the book. This would be why when they read the "parts that are really scary", they got scared, too. Their discussion of the activities of the characters in the book and the happenings in the book all indicate that Peter and his brother get absorbed in the books they read, which is a trait of an engaged reader. They appear to be engaged readers who enjoy the books they read. With limited data available on their book discussions, I cannot comment on how Peter's brother was impacted by the book discussions, but the discussions made Peter eager to read the books his brother discussed.

5.1.3 The Media Through Which the Children Read

To better understand the participants' reading practices, it is important to discuss all the types of texts that are central to their reading and so I will highlight here the types of texts that the children in my study engaged in. All the participants read printed texts, but many of them also read digital texts, and a few listened to audio books. The frequency of reading blogs, chats, comments on YouTube videos and websites shows a digital divide among the children. Of the 15 participants, 13 reported that they read digitally. Four of the children never went on websites and blogs, but most of the children indicated that they often read messages on their phones. There was no report of reading e-mails; however, this is not unusual as the participants of this study were between 9–12 years old. While children who come from well-to-do homes in Nigeria may have personal laptops and iPads, it is not common for children within or below this age range to have email addresses. Perhaps one or two children had an email but did not frequently send or read emails and so did not see the need to include this in the data supplied. The types of digital materials they engaged in will be addressed in Section 5.2.2.

5.2 What the Children Read

Cremin *et al.* (2014) and Coles and Hall (2002) argue that it is important to recognize and respect the range of reading that children engage in. Although all the participants of this study read, the extent to which they read and what they read varies. In discussing what the participants read, I will look at the data from the participants' questionnaires and their interviews, as well as the data from the participants' parents and KBC staff members. The young readers' reasons for reading the types of reading materials that they read will be discussed in Section 5.4.

5.2.1 *Fiction, Comics, Factual Books and Other Types of Texts*

Data from the participants' questionnaires demonstrate that fiction was very popular with the majority of the participants. The question, "How often do you usually read each of the following reading materials: magazines, websites, blogs/emails, newspapers, comics, fiction books, factual books, poems?" got a range of answers. Of the 15 participants, ten reported that they regularly or always read fiction, three children said that they sometimes read fiction, while only two children indicated that they did not read fiction. Oddly, the two children who indicated that they never read fiction are Charles and Peter, who expressed their love for fiction in interviews and elsewhere in the questionnaires when asked to tick the types of books that they liked to read. As mentioned in Section 3.4.6, people's questionnaire responses may not always be well thought-out (Moore, 2000).

The participants' preference for fiction resonates with findings from Coles and Hall (2002) and Smith and Wilhelm (2002). Coles and Hall (2002) report that both boys and girls tend to choose fiction when they choose to read, and that "girls' book-reading choices are overwhelmingly dominated by narrative fiction" (p. 106). Similarly, the adolescent boys in Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) study found storied texts, i.e. texts with stories, appealing, whereas they found textbooks unappealing. The popularity of fiction among the young readers in my study may not be unconnected with the fact that these readers derive immense pleasure from reading fiction as Cliff Hodges (2010a, 2016) argues that literature, which includes fiction, offers pleasure.

There was a substantial interest on the part of many of the young readers in comics which resonates with Evans (2013) and Serantes (2018). Of the 15 children, six indicated that they always read comics, five wrote that they sometimes read comics, one child hardly read comics and three children indicated that they never read comics. Most of the children who reported that they loved to read comics were boys, a finding that supports the PISA 2009 results (OECD,

2010). Although one or two girls liked comics, they were not as popular with the girls as with the boys. Charles was the only boy who indicated that he did not read comics. Coles and Hall's study of the reading habits of 10-14 year old children indicates that comics are more popular among boys than they are among girls. In Section 5.4, I will explore why fiction and comics were very popular among the young readers who took part in my study but will add here that the images in comics played a huge role in the appeal of comics to the participants as they helped the readers to visualize the texts and also conveyed the emotions of the characters.

Nine of the children reported in their questionnaires that they read factual books either regularly or sometimes, while most of the remaining children indicated that they never read factual books. Similarly, seven of the children read poems either regularly or sometimes; of the remaining eight children, seven wrote that they never read poems while one child indicated that she read poems once in a while. From the options of magazines, websites, blogs/emails, newspapers, comics, fiction, factual books and poems, the least popular reading materials were newspapers and magazines. Ten of the 15 children ticked that they never read magazines. Only one child read magazines on a regular basis while four children ticked that they sometimes read magazines.

Nine children indicated that they never read newspapers. Of the remaining eight children, one child regularly read newspapers, three children sometimes read newspapers, and two children ticked that they read newspapers on rare occasions. I think that one reason that some of the young readers may not have found magazines and newspapers appealing is that many magazines such as Newswatch and Tell Magazine and newspapers such as This Day, The Nation, and The Punch, usually lack storied texts. In addition, they are often replete with articles and news that the young readers may have no interest in. It may also be that since parents and adults buy newspapers and magazines for themselves rather than for their children, the children may tend to see newspapers and magazines purely as reading materials for adults. Findings also indicate that less than half of the participants in my study usually have magazines in their home, and only nine participants usually have newspapers in their homes. The unavailability of these reading materials in some homes may also account for why some of the participants do not read them.

To the question, "What types of books do you like to read?", the participants ticked different responses. Adventure books, comedy, picture books, crime/detective, and war/spy-related stories were the most popular types of books read by the children in this study. 13 children

ticked that they liked to read adventure books, ten children ticked that they liked to read comics, and nine children ticked that they liked picture books. Nine of the children liked to read fiction and eight children indicated that they liked novels. Other genres that were not popular but were read by a few participants in the group of 15 children are crime and investigation, fantasy, comedy, non-fiction, horror, science fiction, action, biography and autobiography and historical fiction. The responses to this question also indicate that even though magazines and newspapers were read by a few of the participants, they were not popular choices among most of the participants. In the previous paragraph, I already discussed possible reasons why.

Findings from my study suggest that religious materials are common in many homes. 11 of the 15 participants indicated that religious books were among the reading materials in their home. Interestingly, religious materials ranked second of the range of reading materials that the participants usually have in their home; fiction ranked first with 13 children. Despite the fact that many homes had religious materials, it does not appear that many of the children regularly read them. Very few participants included religious materials in the range of reading materials that they read. It is possible that more children read religious materials than the data indicate. In the section, '*When the Children Read*' which follows after this section, I discuss that even though Charles' interview data reveal that he voluntarily read his Bible every day, this reading was not reflected in how much reading Charles did. It may be that the young readers in my study read more religious materials than they indicated but did not consider this reading as RfP. There is also the possibility that even though many of them had religious materials at home, these materials may have been written purely for adults hence the children may have found them difficult to read. It is also possible that the religious materials available in these children's homes may have been didactic rather than storied texts, and hence the children had no interest in them.

5.2.2 Websites, Blogs and Electronic Messages

In Section 5.1.3, I wrote that some participants read digitally; here, I will address the types of digital texts they read. Although most participants regularly read digital texts, the digital texts involved were mostly WhatsApp messages on phones. Websites and blogs/emails were not part of the regular reading diet of most of the participants. While a third of them ticked that they regularly read websites, blogs and emails, another third ticked that they hardly read these, and the last third ticked that they never read them. This is not altogether surprising since not all the participants had phones, iPads, laptops or access to digital texts, and even for those who did,

limited data and power outages made access to online reading challenging. It therefore appears that for the young readers in my study, the level of engagement with digital texts is largely dependent on access to the internet.

For Karen, Zara, and a few others, the digital reading was limited to reading WhatsApp messages on their phones. However, digital reading was a major part of the reading diet of Charles, Paul and Shehu:

Charles: Umm, I also like to read on my iPad, that's where I read my Bible, because on my iPad it's easier for me to locate the place, and I usually use my iPad because you can start a plan which means that you won't have to be skipping back to a chapter that you won't remember, because you can put a tick when you've read it.

From experience, I know that there is an App for reading the Bible, and that this App can be downloaded on an iPad or an iPhone. On the Bible App, all the books of the Bible are listed, and by clicking on a book, the reader sees all the chapters of the book. When the reader clicks on a chapter, the App opens to the chapter and the reader sees all the verses of the chapter. Opening a passage in a printed version of the Bible requires knowledge of the order in which the books in the Bible are listed and is bound to take some time and effort. It is therefore easier to locate a passage in the Bible through the Bible App than in the printed version. This is what I believe Charles refers to when he says, “on my iPad, it's easier for me to locate the place”.

The Bible App also has another advantage over the printed version of the Bible: it has different Bible reading plans or devotionals from which a reader can choose to read. Some of the plans show one or more specific passages from the Bible that the reader may read each day, and the Bible passage(s) for each day is different from that for another day. Thus, by following a plan, a reader will read different passages of the Bible each day. In addition, a reader may highlight or tick passages that s/he has read while following one plan, such that if s/he starts reading a different plan and the new plan gives her/him passages that s/he has already read, the highlights or ticks, which can be easily removed, will show that s/he has already read the affected Bible passages. I am of the opinion that Charles' latter statements refer to this. Charles could avoid re-reading the Bible chapters he has already read, unless of course he wanted to re-read them, as the 'tick' in the passages would show him that he had already read the affected passages. He is not likely to have this advantage when reading a printed version of the Bible unless he makes marks on the Bible, something he may not want to do. Charles told me that he liked reading the Bible and read it daily. He narrated to me his favourite Bible story which was Daniel in the Lions' Den. The habit of reading his Bible on a daily basis may not be unconnected to the fact

that he read it on his iPad. His response suggests that the ease of reading on his iPad fueled his motivation to read and enabled him to read his Bible more frequently.

Like Charles, Shehu and Paul also read digitally:

IA: Do you read print materials or you read electronic?

Shehu: Both.

IA: Both. Which one do you prefer? I'm just asking out of curiosity.

Shehu: Electronic...Because it can't like tear or get lost... And it is easy to just like save it or download it.... Instead of just carrying it...

Paul: I like reading things I search on Google.

IA: Ok. Is that part of your school work or you're just curious and you search?

Paul: Well....No, it's not part of my school work.....

IA: Okay, ...do you go on websites or blogs to read stuff?

Paul: Hmm, yes, ... whenever I want to read a comic, there's this website I go to, www.readcomicsonline.two.

Comments from Shehu and Paul demonstrate that some children enjoy digital reading (Burnett & Wilkinson, 2005) and given the choice prefer to read digital texts rather than printed books. They also give clues to why some children may prefer reading digital texts. Shehu mentions some advantages of reading digitally which include the fact that the text cannot get torn or lost, and it is easy to save and carry along everywhere as it is stored on a device. Likewise, Paul's comment that he likes reading things he searches on Google suggests that his preference for web-based reading may likely be because of the many possibilities that web-based reading offers to engage with the texts, some of which have been discussed in Section 2.3. I therefore argue that access to electronic materials may motivate some children to read more often and possibly become more engaged readers. In addition to reading electronic texts, Paul also listened to audio books:

Paul: ...there's this app I know of where you can read audio books...if I am doing... something very important, as I am doing the thing, I can be listening to the book.

IA: Okay; do you listen to audio books often?

Paul: No; not often.

IA: Would you say it's the same experience? Is there any difference?...

Paul: Nope...Because it's still reading...

IA: If you had a choice, which one would you prefer?

Paul: ...if I could take all of them, that would be my choice but if it's just one... I would say physical... compared to online and audio books, they are more interesting.

IA: ...And after physical... Audio or online?

Paul: Online then audio.

While listening to audio books was the least preferred form of interacting with texts for Paul, it had the advantage of enabling him ‘read’ or engage in RfP while carrying out another activity. Paul preferred physical books to digital and audio books because he found them more ‘interesting’ by which he may mean easier to interact with or more familiar. It could also be that he found it easier to navigate the pages of a printed book, or to insert bookmarks that could indicate the page he was on. Regardless, this finding indicates that even though some children may enjoy reading digitally, there is still need for printed books in the market.

The divide in digital reading may be as a result of the lack of access rather than a preference for a certain type of text. Odachi and Rose were the two participants who did not at any time engage in digital reading because they did not own the relevant devices. Even for the participants who had devices that allowed digital reading, challenges such as no data and power outage/lack of electricity sometimes made digital reading inaccessible or at best, limited. For instance, Paul who reported reading comics on a website stated that this activity was dependent on access to the internet, implying that he could only read the comics when he had access to the internet. As mentioned in the literature review section, Olasehinde *et al.* (2015) suggest that the internet impacts negatively on the reading habits of Nigerians as many young people prefer to spend most of their time “surfing anti-moral and socially unfriendly websites” (p. 197), playing video games, and chatting with friends, but Griswold *et al.* (2007) indicate that internet usage has either no impact or a slightly positive one on reading. I do not find evidence to show that the internet negatively affected the reading habits of the group of children in my study. Even though some of the participants reported that they watched videos on YouTube, and listened to music online, they also read for pleasure online.

Data on how the children read establish that in addition to their reading practices at school, all of the participants have reading activities outside the school. Most of them regularly discussed the books they read with other participants at KBC, staff members of KBC, family members and friends. Moje *et al.* (2008) argue that the out-of-school time readings that youths do matter for both school achievement and the young reader’s emotional and cognitive development. Whilst I do not have data to support this assertion, findings from my study indicate that the young readers in my study value the reading practices they have outside school. I therefore argue that to encourage the children to become better engaged readers, there is need for schools and parents to acknowledge and validate the outside school reading activities that these young readers engage in.

5.2.3 *Gender-based Readings*

Coles and Hall (2002) suggest that girls read more fiction than boys, but data from my study neither support nor refute this as data from the questionnaires indicate that all but two children in my study regularly read fiction. Of the two children who did not tick that they read fiction regularly, one was a girl and the other a boy. This indicates that fiction was equally popular among both the boys and girls in my study. Perhaps this may be because the participants of my study are a few years younger than the participants of Coles and Hall's (2002) study. It may also be that the differences in the reading taste of boys and girls become greater as the children grow older.

Even though findings from my study showed no difference between boys and girls in the reading of fiction, analyses of the children's responses to the types of books they read showed some differences in the preferences of boys and girls. Based on Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) summary of the research on gender and literacy, boys are more inclined than girls to read graphic novels, comic books, and books about hobbies, sports and things they might do or be interested in doing. Findings from my study support this. In my study, comics, crime/detective, sports fiction and horror/ghost types of books were more popular among boys than girls; whereas six boys indicated that they regularly read comics, only three girls ticked that they read comics and crime/detective books regularly. Of the seven children who regularly read horror/ghost books, two were girls and five were boys, and of the eight children that regularly read sports fiction, three were girls while five were boys. More girls than boys read drama and biographies. There were no significant differences between the number of boys and girls that read adventure books, sci-fi/fantasy, poetry, picture books, war/spy books, animal-related fiction and historical fiction.

Although data from my study suggest differences between boys and girls in the types of books they read, they do not provide evidence that most of the young readers considered gender when choosing what books they read. It was only in one instance that a participant's response showed gender-based reading. This was when I asked Shehu if he had read *Dog Diaries*. He responded by asking, "Isn't that book for girls?" suggesting that he may consider some books to be ideal for girls alone. Shehu's view supports Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) report that findings of research on gender and literacy suggest that "boys tend to resist reading stories about girls, whereas girls do not tend to resist reading stories about boys" (p. 11); however, it is not representative of all the boys in my study. Peter had read and liked *Dog Diaries*, and when

asked what he thought of it, he said, “It’s really cool, because it’s like a girl that is trying to fit into her school.” Also, there was no other finding that suggested that participants considered some books more suited for a certain sex than the other. Therefore, I tend to think that most of the young readers chose what books they read based on how appealing they found the books, rather than on the consideration that certain books were more appropriate for one sex than the other. Their decision to read a book was guided by many factors such as the book cover, blurb, author, themes, recommendations from significant people in their lives, etc., all of which will be addressed in Section 5.4.

5.2.4 Favourite Authors, Books and Series

Five of the 15 participants left the column for their favourite author or series blank. The remaining ten children completed the column with the names of their favourite authors and/or series. Jeff Kinney, author of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, was the most popular author. Other authors that made the list of favourite authors of more than one of the participants are Shakespeare, Ben Carson, Mark Twain, R. L. Stine, Geronimo Stilton, Enid Blyton and Roald Dahl. The following authors were also mentioned among the favourite authors of the children in my study: Andrew Cope, Cecil Murphy, Tim LaHaye, Jerry B. Jenkins, Stephen D. Smith, Hans Christian Anderson, Holly Webb and Alison Kelly. Although Charles Dickens and Francesca Simons did not make the list of favourite authors, a few of the participants indicated that they had read one or more of their works.

Eight of the children had read Enid Blyton books, six children had read Roald Dahl books, and four children had read books by Geronimo Stilton. Four children also reported that they had read a children’s adaptation of at least one play written by Shakespeare. Many of the young readers indicated that they had read classics such as Cinderella, Alice in Wonderland, Hansel and Gretel, Rumpelstiltskin, and Peter Pan. Data from the staff members of KBC indicated that the frequently borrowed authors/books are Geronimo Stilton, Shakespeare for Children, and the Ladybird Classics. The staff members also reported that these were among the books the children frequently discussed at KBC. These findings indicate the variances in the reading taste of the children, confirming the need for a wide range of books and authors for children’s leisure reading (Clark & Phythian-Sence, 2008).

The theme of series emerged in my analysis of the data of what the young readers read. Though it is less salient, I think it is worthy of attention. Some of the series the young readers enjoyed

reading are *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Goosebumps*, and *Encyclopaedia Brown*. Charles told me that he and Paul usually discussed *Goosebumps* which was Paul's favourite series and one of Charles' favourite series. A majority of the children, including those who did not list Jeff Kinney among their favourite authors, were familiar with the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books and ten of them reported that they had read one or more books in the series. Charles' reason for why he likes series supports Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) theory that reading a book in a series provides quicker competence for subsequent books in the series, although it also appears to suggest that the understanding of a book is tied to reading the next book(s):

Charles: I usually like series because there is more to explain, because there's parts and parts and more books relating to something so it will make sense and all.

However, in the context of everything he said, what Charles means is that each book leaves clues for the next story, and series is sort of like a jigsaw puzzle where the picture is only fully understood when every piece is fitted. In addition to Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) and Watson's (2000) suggestion that reading a book in a series provides familiarity with other books in the series, I suggest that the level of enjoyment a reader gets from reading a book in a series will affect the reader's stance towards other books in the series. In other words, if a reader greatly enjoyed the first book s/he read, s/he will adopt an aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994) towards other books in the series and accordingly, will be more likely to enjoy the books. This may explain why children who have enjoyed a particular book in a series go on to read other books in the series.

5.2.5 *Their Views on 'Harry Potter'*

The *Harry Potter* books are very popular among children in the Western world (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). Strangely, they do not appear to be popular among the group of children who took part in my study. None of the participants in my first fieldwork trip mentioned Harry Potter or the author, J. K. Rowling. Although three of the participants in my second fieldtrip knew about the books, Peter was the only child who reported that he had read a Harry Potter book:

Peter: Yes because it was like interesting how a lot of actions went.

IA: Okay, did you read it to the end?

Peter: No, only like half because I was too young, so I did not really get that much interest in finishing a book.

Shehu had watched a Harry Potter movie but had not read any of the books. He said he enjoyed the movie but replied negatively to the question on whether the movie made him desirous of reading the book. Zara, who had also watched a Harry Potter movie had this to say:

IA: Have you read any of the Harry Potter books?

Zara: I hate Harry Potter. It's like witchcraft. And it just doesn't make any sense to me.

IA: But have you read it?

Zara: No, but I've watched the movie.

IA: Did you like the movie?

Zara: No; I felt like I'd be better off in life without watching it.

I lived in Nigeria throughout the period Harry Potter books were published. I am aware that many Nigerian parents forbade their children to read the Harry Potter books and watch Harry Potter movies. The theory was that it was about witchcraft and would therefore introduce children into witchcraft. Usually, when a children's book or film is immensely popular, common merchandise such as clothing items and stationery are branded with the major characters in the book or film. This was no different in the case of Harry Potter. However, some parents were so set against any item with the Harry Potter brand that they did not only refrain from buying any merchandise branded with Harry Potter, but discarded any gift their children got that had the Harry Potter brand on it.

Zara may have been echoing what she heard others say, or was told about Harry Potter books as adults usually have a very strong influence on children's views in Nigeria. Parents' disapproval of Harry Potter may be the reason why Harry Potter books were not popular among the young readers in my study. Zara apparently has a distaste for witchcraft as her words suggest that she hates Harry Potter books because they are about witchcraft. This may be why she believed she was better off not watching the Harry Potter movie. As previously stated, Rosenblatt (1938/1995) argues that literature allows us to participate in imaginary situations. Zara may have realized that books and films allowed her to participate in imaginary situations; her refusal to read Harry Potter books may be because she did not want to participate in imaginary situations that involved witchcraft. There is also the possibility that Zara may expect the books she reads and the films she watches to illuminate her life or educate her in some way hence she considered watching Harry Potter movies a waste of time. Another explanation for her dislike of Harry Potter books could be that she preferred realistic fiction to fantasy, but this does not seem to be the case here as findings from Zara's questionnaire indicate that she likes sci-fi and fantasy. I am therefore led to believe that Zara's hatred for Harry Potter may be due to its themes of witchcraft.

Moje *et al.* (2008) provide evidence that movies could influence children's reading and that some children are stimulated to read a book after they have watched a movie based on the book. My study did not investigate how much the children were influenced to read a book after they

had watched the film hence I do not have sufficient data to comment on this. However, Shehu and Zara who watched Harry Potter movies but did not go on to read the books provide evidence that watching movies does not always influence children to read books. It may be that Harry Potter movies and books do not appeal to the taste of this group of children, or that as I have already explained, Shehu's and Zara's reaction to Harry Potter movies and books may have been strongly influenced by the comments many people in Nigeria made about Harry Potter being about witchcraft.

5.2.6 *The Role of Images*

For many participants, the importance of images in the texts they read was evident as the theme of images repeatedly came up in the data. Many children discussed how 'pictures' affected their engagement with the text. This is not unusual as research indicates that images lure many children and adolescents into reading books and also help them to engage with the texts (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Meek, 1988). Concerning their study of literacy in young men, Smith and Wilhelm (2002) write, "All of the boys insisted that the best materials were highly visual, or stimulated visual thinking" (p. 152). Images, especially coloured ones, are interesting to look at and appealing to the eyes which is why they are usually used for advertisement of products. Even when people may not be interested in reading a text, a compelling image could make them pause, take a second look at the image, and thereafter read the text within or by the image. Therefore, images could attract a person to a book and lead the person to read the book. But that is not the only purpose that images serve. Meek (1988) indicates that images help the reader to make meaning of the text by visually narrating the text. Before I further explore the theme of images, I will define different types of images that featured in the reading materials my participants read, namely, illustrations, pictures, comic art, and sketches. By illustration, I mean "a picture in a book, magazine, etc." (Illustration, n.d.), and by picture, I refer to "a drawing, painting, photograph, etc...." (Picture, n.d.). Comic art refers to "an art form that features a series of static images in sequence, usually to tell a story" (Evans, 2013, p. 235). 'Sketch' is "a rough drawing representing the chief features of an object or scene and often made as a preliminary study" (Sketch, n.d.). Accordingly, I consider pictures, comic arts and sketches to be illustrations in reading material. They may be either black and white or coloured. However, my study's participants tend to use the word 'picture' for all types of images as the distinctions are not commonly made by children of this age in Nigeria.

Although some children did not express their views on images in books, those who did had strong views, and it appeared that the presence or absence of images could influence the child's decision to read a particular book:

IA: What makes you decide, "This is the book I'm going to read at this time"?

Karen: The pictures.

When pressed further, Karen mentioned other factors such as the blurb, but the fact that the first response was the pictures suggests that images weighed heavily in her decision to read a book. Further, she added, "If it doesn't have a picture and it doesn't have a summary, I won't read it." It is likely that Karen depended on images to make meaning of the text. It may also be that she found them pleasing and appealing to look at. Images also mattered to Zara:

Zara: Like, because some books they don't have pictures and you just, when you just look at it, you'll say this book is boring... it can still be a novel, but I think after a few pages you can put one picture. It doesn't have to be with colours....

IA: How do you feel when you see a picture in a book?

Zara: It (pictures) makes me feel interested

It was not likely that Zara would read a book without images as she considered such books to be boring. She serves to inform us that there are children who will not read a book that does not have any images; to build a community of readers, the needs of this group of children must also be catered to. However, it was not only the presence of images that Zara considered; she also looked at the type of images.

Zara: I've heard of Roald Dahl before, but I wouldn't like to read his books...Because I told you before that I just look at the picture and I will know if I like it. When I saw it, I didn't like it because of the drawings.

Zara provides evidence of the impact that images potentially have on young readers and their reading engagement. Meek (1988) provides evidence that pictures and illustrations play a key role in children's interaction with texts, and help to foster their interest in, and love for reading by providing a guide to the meaning of the texts, an argument supported by Evans (1998). To quote from Evans (1998), "Illustrations have a crucial role to play in enabling children to gain meaning from books and apart from in wordless texts they work in partnership with print in picture books" (p. 28). In other words, the illustrations in picture books give children clues to the meaning of the text and vice versa. Meek (1988) narrates how the pictures in Pat Hutchins' *Rosie's Walk* helped a young beginning reader, Ben, to learn significant reading lessons. The pictures ably narrated the story of a fox following Rosie the hen even though there was no

mention of the fox within the text. On the other hand, texts could also provide meaning to images. For instance, children in rural villages in Nigeria who have never seen an aeroplane or a train could figure out what either or both an aeroplane and a train look like and what functions they serve if they see the images of an aeroplane and/or a train within the texts that they read about these means of transportation. This, the mutually supportive relationship of texts and images, may be what Evans (1998) means by ‘partnership’. It was not only Karen and Zara that liked books with images; Adanna did, too:

Adanna: I like picture books and maybe historical books...But the ones that have pictures in them.

Adanna’s comment indicates that the presence of pictures in the historical books was integral to her enjoyment of the books, and without them, the books would likely lose their appeal. Again, it may be that she depended on the images to provide meaning of the text, or liked the fact that the images helped her to visualize the texts. Charles was another child who spoke about the relevance of images in a book:

Charles: I know most kids my age, 10 years old, would love comic books and all because they look cool and all, but I don't really like comic books because they are just short words most of the time with too many pictures.

IA: Do you like picture books?

Charles: Yes, I do, because, I am not saying that I am against imagining, because sometimes the books that don't have pictures, it annoys me when I try to imagine what it is, but then my mind is just playing tricks on me like, no, it looks like this, it looks like like that. That's why I like it when I see a picture so I can just say, yea, it looks like that.

Charles states that he does not like comics as they have “short words” and “too many pictures”, implying that he would prefer if comics had longer texts and fewer pictures. However, he also says that while he is not against imagining, it annoys him “to have to imagine” when he reads books that have no pictures. It might look like he is contradicting himself, but this is not the case. The phrase ‘too many pictures’ hints at the fact that Charles was not against comics having images but considered the number of images in comics to be too many. Besides, his annoyance when he tries to imagine while reading books that have no images reveals that he preferred to read books with images. Beyond that, the comment about trying to imagine and his mind playing tricks on him indicates that when reading books without images, Charles’ mind frequently suggested possible images to him. This provides evidence that some children’s imaginations are stirred when reading but also indicates that images helped the reader to visualize the text and thereby better understand and engage with it.

Contrary to Charles' sentiments about comics, Jide, one of the children who liked comics, liked them because of the many illustrations in them:

IA: Why do you like comics?

Jide: They have a lot of pictures, ...And they give more sight into what they're talking about.

By "they give more sight into what they're talking about", I believe Jide meant that the pictures portrayed the text and perhaps made it easier for readers to understand them. According to Campbell (2002), illustrations serve to either support the text, or create a character, or suggest a setting or develop the plot, and when they meet these purposes, the "illustrations can provide an important contribution to the child's development as a reader, because they capture the child's involvement and engagement with the book" (p. 63). The case of the beginning reader in Meek (1988) which was earlier discussed in this sub-section provides evidence of how images can provide a guide to the meaning of a text and thereby help a child to enjoy reading. Whilst the assertion is true of many of the young readers in my study, Odachi and Paul provide contrary evidence. Odachi, who said she did not like books with pictures, had this to say:

IA: You don't like books with pictures, why?

Odachi: Because it drags my attention...I'll be looking at the pictures instead of reading.

IA: So you prefer to read books that don't have pictures?

Odachi: Yes.

I believe that by "drags my attention", Odachi meant that the illustrations took her focus off the texts and distracted her from reading the texts continuously without any interruption. I found Odachi's comments surprising as I had observed that she sometimes read books that had pictures in them. I therefore asked her about the books with pictures that she sometimes read:

IA: But some of those fiction books, they have pictures, don't they?

Odachi: Yes, but ...sometimes even when there are pictures, but if they're really made up and they are interesting, I don't usually concentrate on the pictures. I just read the book. If I see a picture, I just flip it.

By 'flipped', I believe she meant that she concentrated on reading the texts, ignored the pictures and flipped to the next page after reading the text on one page. Paul also preferred books that did not have pictures, and his reason for this already stated in Section 4.2.4 is that the images did not help in the expansion of his imagination. Odachi's and Paul's comments are interesting for several reasons. First, they show that there are different reasons why some children may not like images in books. Secondly, they reveal that Campbell's (2002) assertion that

illustrations capture the child's involvement and engagement with the book is not true of every young reader. Campbell (2002) focuses on reading in the early years, and at 12 and 10 years old respectively, Odachi and Paul are a few years older than the children whose reading needs Campbell (2002) addresses. This may explain why the findings from Odachi's and Paul's data refute Campbell's (2002) assertion. Odachi also reveals that not everyone who reads a book with images is drawn to the book by the images; some readers may be captivated by either the theme, or story plot or setting or even the writing style of the author. In addition, Odachi provides evidence that children read books differently: she ignored the pictures in books and concentrated solely on the texts. This was quite different from how Zara read books that had pictures:

IA: Do you look at the pictures when you are reading a book?

Zara: I look at the pictures, but I also read the words. Normally, if there are speech bubbles, I will read the words first, then I'll read the speech bubbles, then look at the pictures.

Jide, who said that he liked comics because of the many pictures in them said that he also liked books that did not have images. The reason he gave for this was quite interesting:

Jide: I still like those that don't have pictures.

IA: Why?

Jide: They are still more interesting, even if you're still reading it, you can still imagine it in your mind as you are reading it.

Jide's views were not too different from those of Paul and Charles who believe that the absence of pictures forced the reader to imagine or envisage the scenarios described in the book. Whilst the comments of Paul and Charles support the interconnection between reading and imagination (Pihl & Kooij, 2016; Cliff Hodges, 2010a), they raise questions about the role images play in helping to cultivate children's imagination. However, it is not within the scope of this study to explore this. What is relevant to this study is that findings indicate that while some young readers prefer books with images, there are children who prefer books that do not have images, hence these preferences should be reflected in the books provided for children to read.

5.2.7 Evidence from the Parents

Among other things, I asked parents to indicate the types of books their children liked to read by ticking boxes with different genres of books. Only eight parents completed this section on the questionnaire and some of their responses did not tally with the children's. The participant

whose responses tallied the most with her parent's was Zara. Zara's mother reported that Zara liked to read books about adventure, crime and detective, comedy, picture books, war/spy-related books, all of which Zara had ticked she liked reading. Zara also ticked that she liked to read sci-fi/fantasy, comics and historical fiction which her mother had not included. In most instances, the parents ticked a few genres which were among the many genres that the child ticked that s/he liked reading. The elusive nature of reading pointed out by Cliff Hodges (2010b) is mentioned in Section 3.4.3 and may be responsible for the differences in the responses given by the participants and their parents. As will be seen in Section 5.3, in some instances, the reading was done away from the view of family and friends. Also, in the questionnaire, Karen's mother wrote that she had not paid any attention to Karen's reading suggesting the possibility that some parents may not have paid much attention to their children's reading and therefore did not know what their children read. This would also explain why parents' perceptions of how much reading children did differed from what the children reported.

Evidence from my study indicates that like children in other places, the children in Nigeria read a wide range of genres. It is important for adults and schools to recognize this, as the assumption that all children will love the same types of books is misleading and may prevent parents and teachers from catering to the needs of all the children. As mentioned in the literature review section, Layne (2009; 2015) suggests that teachers' selection of books should cover a wide range of genres so that the students may discover the kind of book that they really like. Also, Cremin (2015) recommends that children should be allowed to read whatever materials they enjoy reading, and in whatever format they prefer, be it printed or digital, as doing otherwise may reduce the potential for them to enjoy leisure reading.

5.3 When the Children Read

Although the focus of my study is the extent to which the group of children I researched with read and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP, I wondered whether looking into *when* they read both within and outside KBC might help to give a broader picture of their reading engagement. For this reason, this section will look at when the children in my study read.

Some children read for 30 minutes while the others read for either a shorter or longer time. A few did not indicate how much time they spent reading. The interview responses of a few of

the children differed from the responses they had given in the questionnaires, but the majority of the responses in the interviews tallied with the responses given in the questionnaires. As they had indicated in their questionnaires, the interview data revealed that Odachi and Paul read every day, and that Zara did not do any leisure reading during the school term but read three days a week during the vacation period. Similarly, the interview data of Karen, Jide, and a few other children indicated that they read three to four days each week as they had reported in their questionnaires. However, the interview data of Mike and Ngozi who reported reading every day in their questionnaires showed that they read for five days and three days each week respectively. Caleb who in his questionnaires reported that he read every day revealed in his interview that he did not do much reading.

There were also discrepancies in the data of Shehu and Charles; these were briefly discussed in Section 4.2.1 under the sub-heading *More Reading Than They Claim to Do?* Charles' questionnaire indicated that he read for pleasure three days in a week. However, the data from his interviews indicate otherwise:

Charles: I read my Bible once every day because it's interesting.

IA: Do you read your Bible because ...someone says you have to read it? Or you read it because you want to read it?

Charles: My mum said I have to read it, and I said okay. But... one day I was reading my Bible and after I finished what my mummy said I should read, I ended up reading more and it was interesting.... I now read it because I like reading it.

Shehu's questionnaire data indicate that he read twice each week but findings from his interview data differed:

Shehu: During the holiday, I read like in the night because everyone is asleep and it's quiet.

IA: Do you read every night?

Shehu: Almost every night...Because I normally don't really sleep that well, so I get up and read and I drift off.

Shehu's night reading was obviously not reflected in his questionnaire. His interview data also threw up another interesting point: he read more during the holiday period than during the school term. A possible explanation for the inconsistency in the data may be that while completing the questionnaire, he may have been considering the times he read during the school term rather than when he read during the vacation period. This finding supports my argument that some of the children may under-estimate and thereby under-report how much reading they do. In addition, the above findings from Charles and Shehu demonstrate that some of the leisure reading that children do is done hidden away from others and lead me to argue that some

children may read much more than the adults in their lives believe they do. As the following interview excerpts show, RfP was something Shehu did in private, and the likelihood of his family knowing how much reading he did was quite slim, unless he chose to tell them.

IA: Okay, let's imagine that you start reading this book because you cannot sleep. The following day, in the day time, are you likely to pick up the book and continue reading?

Shehu: No.

IA: You'll just wait until the nighttime when you cannot sleep?

Shehu: Yeah. Because my house is really noisy.

Shehu's comment that "my house is really noisy" will be further discussed in Chapter 6 where I address the factors that affect children's engagement with RfP.

Data from the participants reveal that like Shehu, most of the children read differently during the school term than they do during the vacation period. Odachi, Zara and others say that they read more in the holiday period than they do during the school term. Interestingly, a common reason given was that they did not have much time to read as schoolwork took much of their time.

IA: Do you read a lot during the school term?

Odachi: No, I don't really read much. ...Because, umm, I used to spend most of the time doing my homework. And reading the things they ask me to read.

IA: Then what about during the holiday? Do you do much reading then?

Odachi: Yes.

Conversely, Karen, Adanna, Mike, Caleb, Chidi and Onome said that they did more leisure reading during the school term than during the holiday period. The reasons for this differ as these excerpts from the interviews show:

Karen: Hmm, well, sometimes I like to read my school notes because sometimes they might be so interesting like history of Nigeria. I love reading that particular bit.

IA: Okay, and you're not reading it just to pass an exam or because the teacher had said you should read it?

Karen: No.

Adanna: I read more during the school term because that is more serious for me...

IA: Okay, why is that?

Adanna: Well... during the school term... I love to read. We have free period most times so I usually read more.

As mentioned earlier, a few participants attended schools that had a period set aside for RfP. This provided an opportunity for these participants to read at school. Many of the children

whose schools did not have a set time for reading also found time to read for pleasure during the school term. This was mostly done in the following times: during periods when there was no lesson in class, after school club, at home in the evenings when their homework was done, and during the weekends.

During the holiday periods, the children read at home, during the reading period at KBC, and during the free periods at KBC. Paul spoke for himself and a few of the participants when he said, "...sometimes after the book club (KBC), I just pick a book when I am bored and start reading". Zara, Odachi, Peter, Paul, and Shehu claimed that they spent more time on RfP during the holiday period than they did during the school term. Again, their reasons for this differ. These findings further support my argument that the extent to which the participants read varies throughout the year, such that some participants read more during certain periods, say term time, than they do at other periods. This may explain the discrepancies in some of the participants' responses as they may be considering only a specific time period when responding to enquiries of how much reading they did. Further, an investigation into why the children read more in one period than they did in another period reveals that the social networks and support that nurture engagement in RfP was not available at all times. For instance, during the holiday periods, Mike's father forced him to read books that he did not like, and this affected how much leisure reading he did in those periods.

5.4 Why the Children Read

I seek to understand the children's motivations for reading as well as why they read the particular books that they read. Therefore, I will be looking at why they read when they choose to read, and why they read the particular books they read. What motivates these young readers to read for pleasure and why do they read the types of texts that they read? What factors do they consider when selecting a book to read? To address these questions, I turn to the words of these young readers and look to the data from their interviews and questionnaires for evidence.

5.4.1 Why the Children Read: Their Motivations for Reading

I posed specific questions about their motivations for reading to the participants of my study and received responses that were very varied. For example, in the questionnaire, "Why do you read when you read?" had many responses. A few of the children gave more than one reason for reading, and some of the responses the children gave were similar. The most common reasons given had to do with reading/books being interesting and the participant's need to while

away time when bored. Five of the 15 children wrote that books are interesting, four indicated that they read when they were bored and needed to keep busy, three children wrote that they read to acquire more knowledge, while two children reported that they read because they enjoyed reading and found it to be fun. The words ‘enjoy’, ‘fun’, ‘interesting’ suggest that the readers found reading to be a pleasurable and worthwhile activity which indicates, according to Meek (1990), that these children are readers.

The responses of the young readers on why they read also indicate that the readings they did were done voluntarily, and not at the prompting of an adult. For instance, the child who read when he could not sleep in the night was not prompted by anyone to read then. Similarly, it is not likely that the children who read when they were bored were instigated by an adult to read. These findings therefore provide evidence that the recreational reading these young readers did was usually done for the pleasure anticipated from the reading (Rosenblatt (1978/1994).

Through the responses to the question on the questionnaire, “What do you think about reading?”, I was provided with further insight of how this group of children felt about reading, and what motivated them to read. Again, the responses the participants gave varied. Six children reported that reading was fun and/or interesting, and five reported that reading could help in increased knowledge and/or vocabulary. While data indicate that some of the readings the participants of my study did were embedded in their social practices, socializing does not appear to be the major driving force behind their readings which is unlike the case in the participants in Moje *et al.* (2008). Based on the questionnaire data, the children in my study read for enjoyment, to get knowledge, as a means of escape out of boredom, because they found books interesting and entertaining, and because they believed that reading would help them achieve their career goals. Perhaps the differences in the motivations behind the reading may be because my study’s participants were younger than the participants in Moje *et al.*’s (2008) study.

The motivation of many participants appears to be more intrinsic in nature than extrinsic (Guthrie *et al.*, 2004; Cox & Guthrie, 2001). Although a few participants mentioned the functional purposes of reading, i.e. reading can help you to be a doctor, the findings strongly suggest that most of the participants read because they have an interest in reading and enjoyed reading, rather than because they sought to avoid punishment or get a reward of some kind. These findings lead me to argue that given the right support structures, many of the participants may be motivated to read more.

5.4.2 *Why the Children Read: The Genre Matters, Too*

The data from the interviews did not differ from the questionnaire data; however, the interviews provided opportunities to explore in greater depth their motivations for reading. For instance, Shehu initially said he read to get knowledge, by which I believe he means increased knowledge which Stanovich & Cunningham (1993) demonstrate is one of the benefits of RfP. When probed further, Shehu revealed that he also read because he enjoyed reading. His responses indicate that he read different genres for different reasons:

Shehu: I'll say that reading takes knowledge... from the book into your brain especially if it's a non-fiction book

IA: Would you read if it didn't give you knowledge?

Shehu: No.

IA: No. So, you read books only to get knowledge? What about the fiction books that you read?

Shehu: Umm, the fiction books that I read, umm, they normally don't really give me knowledge, they're normally like...

IA: Yes, so why do you read them then?

Shehu: Because they're enjoyable....

On why they read the particular genres or types of texts that they read, the responses of the children varied. Peter said that he liked fantasy, adventure, fiction, crime and detective books "because they have better characters". When I asked him what he meant, Peter explained that he preferred these books to novels because novels were about human beings and therefore would not help to expand his imagination. I believe that by 'better characters', he meant that the characters in the book could do make-believe things, hence he found them appealing as I am aware that the books he likes are also novels. Below are the responses of some participants on why they read certain genres of books:

Zara: I love reading crime and investigation books because I think they are very interesting. Then I love to read comedy because it's funny, also comics....

Adanna: Okay, I like reading adventure books because they are, like I said, I don't like boring books. Adventure books are not boring at all and they are really nice. Uhm, factual books, they teach me a lot about things. I don't like novels as much, but I read novels just because I don't have any other book to read.

Caleb: Because it (comics and picture books) is filled with lots of adventures.

Chidi: They (comics and novels) are, some are animated while some are non-fiction, and I like the fiction because it gives you an imagination of what you have read.

In Chapter 4, as well as in previous sections of this chapter, I have explored the comments of some of the readers who linked reading fiction with the expansion of their imagination. By saying that fiction gave him an imagination of what he had read, Chidi may have meant that when he read fiction, his imagination was stirred as he visualized the things he read.

These data on the genres the participants liked suggest that the children read to the extent that they know their reading preferences and can also identify the different book genres. The readers also knew the genres well enough to have specific expectations of them. Shehu read non-fiction to get more knowledge, and Adanna claimed that factual books taught her a lot about things. The point I am making is that the participants must have read many books to form their opinions of the different genres and to decide the genres that appeal the most to them. Their responses suggest that they are experienced readers who know what books they like. The findings also provide evidence that the young readers have different preferences for the texts they read, and based on their preferences, enjoy reading texts in certain genres more than others.

5.4.3 Why the Children Read: Other Factors They Consider

Data from the interviews also reveal that in addition to the genre, there were other factors that influenced the decision of the young readers to read or not read a particular text. Some of the factors these young readers tended to consider in the choice of what book to read were features of the book such as the cover, the title, the author, illustrations in the book, the subject or themes, and the blurb. Other factors that influenced the decision to read a particular book were the popularity of the book, recommendations by either friends, or a teacher or a family member, book discussions, and the experience when hearing the book read aloud. Even though different factors mattered to different children, all the 15 children depended on several of these factors to guide them in the decision to read or not read a book.

5.4.3.1 The Book Cover, the Title, the Blurb

The factor that mattered to the most number of children was the blurb; 11 children reported that they usually read the blurb to see if they would like the book or not. Seven children said that the cover of the book also affected their decision to read a book while four children said that in addition to other factors, they also considered the title of the book. Charles and Zara shared sentiments echoed by many:

Charles: I look at the title and the cover. I know they say don't judge a book by its cover, but I just look at the cover and I also flip through the book and I also read the blurb.

Zara: Mostly when you look at the cover and the title and sometimes you look at the blurb, you will know that the book is interesting....sometimes I look through the book to see if it's interesting.

Zara spoke for herself and a few others when she said how she chose a book: four children stated that they sometimes flipped through the book to help them decide if they would read it. Even though the book cover was a factor that influenced about a half of the participants, five children reported that they were not influenced by the book cover. Among these children were Ngozi and Chidi who gave their reasons for not being swayed by a book cover.

IA: What about the book cover? Does that guide you?

Ngozi: No, because you might not know if the book is boring.

Chidi: Sometimes books are boring inside, but they have amazing covers.

Although Ngozi and Chidi did not give any example to back their claims that a boring book could have an appealing cover, their responses suggest that they may have read widely and had the experience of not having a book live up to the expectation given by the book cover.

5.4.3.2 *The Author, the Illustrations, the Themes*

Other factors that mattered to many of the young readers in my study were the book author, the illustrations and the themes explored in the books. To determine whether to read a book or not, five children considered the book author, four children considered the illustrations in the book, and eight children looked at the subject or themes explored in the book. Below are some of the comments of the readers whose decisions to read a book were guided by either the author, or the illustrations, or the themes explored in the book:

IA: What are all the things that you would say help you to decide you want to read a particular book?

Ngozi: Like I said before the author.

Even though the author's name was one of the considerations in reading a book, it did not imply that the young readers would not read the authors they did not know as this snippet from Charles interview shows:

IA: Okay, does that mean you wouldn't go for an author that you don't know?

Charles: I would, but it depends on the book.

When the author was not known to the reader, the reader looked to other features of the book to decide if s/he should read the book. One of such features was the illustration. In Section 5.2.6, I discussed how important it was to many of the young readers that books have images. For readers like Karen and Rose who at age 7 were the youngest participants of the study, the primary consideration for reading a book appears to be the images in the book. Rose who initially said she considered only the 'pictures' when deciding if she would read a book later admitted that she would read a book if it was about dolls, indicating that the theme also mattered to her:

IA: So, if it's a book about dolls, would it make you interested in reading it?

Rose: Yes.

The theme explored in the book also mattered to Caleb. Caleb was not always forthcoming during his interview and mostly responded with monosyllables. Therefore, to understand the basis on which he selected books to read, I placed before him many books and asked him to pick one at a time in the order of the kind of book he most preferred to read. Every time he picked a book, I asked him why he picked that particular book and not another book, and in this way, I discovered what factors weighed in on his decision to read a book. The first book he picked was a book written by Geronimo Stilton, indicating that his first consideration was the author, but as the excerpt shows, the theme was also a consideration.

IA: Why did you pick that book and not any other book?

Caleb: Because I like Geronimo Stilton.

IA: Okay, so sometimes you choose a book because you like the author?

Caleb: Yes.

IA: Okay, pick another book here. So why did you pick that one and not any other book there?

Caleb: Because I like basketball.

IA: Because you like basketball, and you've seen a picture of basketball?

Caleb: Yes.

5.4.3.3 The Popularity of the Book, Discussions about the Book, Recommendations from Significant Persons

Many of the young readers in my study said that they were also motivated to read books either because of the popularity of the book, or discussions around the book or the recommendations from people who were significant in their lives. Eight children reported that the popularity of

a book would influence them to read the book. Charles, one of the eight children, had this to say:

Charles: Yes, because like, I don't want that a book would be very popular, and I would be like, "I don't care, I'm not going to read it", then too many people keep saying, "Oh, it's so amazing!" and I'd be like, "Okay, it's amazing. I need to try it."

However, four children reported that they were not influenced by the popularity of a book. Zara was one of these children:

IA: And are you also influenced by the popularity of the book?

Zara: No...because maybe it might be interesting to the other person but when you read it you may not like it.

Book discussions among their friends also played a major role in motivating the children to read a particular book as findings from Paul demonstrates here:

Paul: Well, the way I was introduced to Diary of a Wimpy Kid, I was in year 3 and people in my class and some of my friends were talking about the book, reading the book. So then, I now said, is this book really that interesting to myself? And then when I got a chance to read the book, I found out that it was actually as interesting as they were saying it was.

But again, there were participants whose decision to read a book was not influenced by the fact that they had heard people discuss the book. In this group are Chidi and Zara:

IA: What about if your friends are talking about a book, do you think that would make you want to read it?

Chidi: No, because there are books that people don't like and those same books other people might like it.

IA: If your teacher is talking about the book, would that make you interested in reading it?

Zara: No.

IA: What about your friends, if you see your friends reading a book would that make you want to read it?

Zara: It depends on the friend cause I have two best friends who have the same taste as me so if they recommend a book, I'll read it.... One of my friends, her name is Chimara, she's not part of my best friends, but she recommended a book. When I started to read it, I kind of liked it.

IA: Ok, did you read it to the end?

Zara: No, at a point it got boring. That is why I normally read the books that my best friends recommend.

Chidi said that different people have different tastes in books. This view is supported by Zara's statement that she had read a book recommended by a friend and found the book boring. Zara trusted the recommendation of her best friends whom she said had the same taste in books as

she did. This may explain why she was not likely to be swayed to read a book based on the fact that her teacher had talked about the book.

5.4.3.4 An Experience of the Book Through Reading Aloud

Reading aloud was another factor that motivated some children to read a book. A few participants claimed that when someone read aloud a story or book to them, it made them interested in reading the story or book. The comments below by Charles and Karen are indicative of the views expressed:

IA: Okay, but if they read it and stopped mid-way, would you want to read it?

Charles: Yea, Auntie Ese she read part, one story of *Math Rashes*. It's like a book with many stories.

IA: And then it made you read the other stories?

Charles: Yes.

IA: When people read books aloud to you and stop mid-way, does it encourage you to read the story to the end?

Karen: Yes; Auntie Ese was reading a story that ended up to be one of Aladdin's story. So then I now picked up that book, I now found the story and now read it. I now found some other stories in that same book like Rumpelstiltskin.

Reading aloud will be discussed further in Chapter 6 where I discuss the factors that affect the participants' engagement with RfP. However, based on the responses of Charles and Karen, I argue that reading aloud could be used to motivate some children to read more. My data convince me that the participants of my study do read for pleasure. Although they give various responses for why they read, their answers suggest that most of these young readers are experienced readers who are primarily motivated to read because of the pleasure anticipated from reading. Given the right conditions, these children would be more engaged readers.

Findings on what factors guided my study participants to choose books for leisure reading are similar to those in Maynard *et al.*'s (2008) survey of children's reading in England. The reasons why respondents of Maynard *et al.*'s study often chose books included the book cover, the book title or name, the images inside, the author's name, the illustrator's name, recommendations from someone, the blurb, and the themes. Although children's book choices may differ, it appears that the factors that guide them in selecting the texts to read are similar.

5.5 Chapter Summation:

Once again, these data provide evidence that some children in Nigeria do read, and also reveal what genres of books the children like to read, as well as their motivations for reading. In addition, the findings suggest that the participants may be experienced readers who regularly read for pleasure. Coles and Hall (2002) write that “When schools devalue or ignore home and community literacy practices the child's self-concept as an independent reader and writer is damaged, and a fundamental principle of effective learning is violated” (p. 107). They argue that school literacy practices should complement and enhance the literacy practices at home and in the community and suggest that teachers acquire a detailed knowledge of the literacy practices of their pupils so that they (the teachers) may be better equipped to help establish the appropriate literacy education for the pupils. Even though my study is focused on reading and not literacy, literacy practices involve reading hence the argument is relevant to my study. Additionally, findings from my data lead me to support the argument that school literacy practices, in particular, reading practices, should complement the practices at home. In Chapter 6, I will address the factors that affect this group of children's engagement with RfP and what social networks and affordances exist to nurture and support their leisure reading.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS 3: THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE READING ENGAGEMENT OF THE 9–12 YEAR OLDS AT KBC AND THE SOCIAL NETWORKS AND AFFORDANCES THAT EXIST TO SUPPORT THEIR LEISURE READING

6.0 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I addressed my second research question which examined how, what, when and why the 9–12 year olds at KBC read, both within the book club and beyond the book club. In this chapter, I will address the third research question which is: *What factors affect their (the 9–12 year olds) engagement with RfP and what social networks and affordances exist to nurture and support their leisure reading?*

In Section 2.5, I discussed that evidence suggests that several factors affect children's engagement with RfP, and I discussed some of these factors. I also stated that Layne (2009) argues that even though reading is a choice, children can be impacted by certain factors in such a way that they will more likely than not make the choice to read. According to Anderson *et al.* (1985) whose report on reading is referenced in Section 2.5, reading is a cultural phenomenon, meaning that an individual's attitude towards reading can be influenced by the attitude of others towards reading and the presence or absence of social networks that support reading. One example of this is when teachers' reading aloud helps to promote RfP in students, previously mentioned in Section 2.5.3 (Layne, 2015). In this chapter, I aim to analyse how the different factors discussed in Section 2.5 affect the participants of this study as well as what social networks and affordances exist to nurture and support these children's leisure reading. To address the third research question, I shall look to data principally from the interviews, but also data from the questionnaires and observation.

6.1 The Factors that Affect the Reading Engagement of the 9–12 Year Olds at KBC

6.1.1 Pedagogy of Reading Revisited

Studies indicate that children's attitude to reading and literary texts is often affected by the reading practices used (Layne, 2015; Rosenblatt, 1978/1994; Meek, 1988). Even though these studies were conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom, findings from my study which will be discussed in this section indicate that the pedagogy of reading is also relevant in the Nigerian context. While this study focuses on the leisure reading the 9–12 year olds at KBC

did rather than on the reading of school texts in literature classes, I will look at the pedagogy of reading in KBC, the home and the school. Rosenblatt (1978/1994) argues that depending on how a text is introduced to them, children could adopt an efferent attitude towards the text. Consequently, a child who has developed an efferent attitude towards literary texts and learned to read non-aesthetically may not enjoy leisure reading. This implies that the attitude of the participants towards leisure reading even in KBC was likely determined by the pedagogies of reading in KBC, the participants' homes and their schools. Hence there is a need to look at reading practices in these places.

A recurrent theme in the data of both group and individual interviews was reading being accompanied by questions. Most of the children attended schools where the teachers did not read aloud to the class, but almost all the participants whose teachers read to the class reported that the teachers usually asked questions after the reading aloud session. As I stated in Chapter 5 where I address how the children read at KBC, reading aloud sessions by staff members were accompanied by questions. Although the children did not make any reference to the reading aloud sessions at KBC, they stated that they did not like being asked questions after reading of any kind. Peter's and Zara's views in this excerpt of a group interview, are representative of the views expressed by most participants on having to answer questions after a reading aloud session:

Peter: It kind of makes me feel like they're going to give us an exam or a test afterwards. So, I'll have to really listen to it...If it's a story, they should read aloud and have no questions...

Zara: Because if you are reading for fun there is no use of asking questions.

Likening the experience to an exam or test means Peter saw the reading aloud as some kind of assessment of perhaps his listening skills. A test required preparation, which must be what Peter means when he said that he had to pay attention to the reading. The implication is that he was no longer listening to the reading aloud just for the fun or the pleasure it gave, but to be better prepared to answer the questions that would follow. His stance toward the reading aloud was efferent as he listened, not for the pleasure he would get, but to get facts and details he would need to answer the questions. Zara's comment implied that she may have seen asking questions and RfP as incompatible.

In his personal interview, Mike, whose ‘leisure reading’ at home will be discussed fully in Section 6.1.2.2 expressed strong sentiments about having to answer questions from his father and brother on the books he read at home:

IA: How do you feel when you are asked questions about the book?

Mike: It feels like, they are just giving me, like when I finish reading, they are just giving me other things to do.

IA: And does it make you enjoy reading the book then?

Mike: No.

Mike’s comment suggests that he may be seeing reading as a task of some sort, as he considers the questions that follow as ‘other things to do’. It could be assumed that the knowledge that he would be asked questions reduced his interest in reading the book and shifted his stance to an efferent stance (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994). Mike thus provides further evidence of how children are affected by the pedagogy of reading. Mike did not say what consequences he would face if he did not answer the questions correctly, but Zara did:

IA: So, if they ask questions and you don’t answer, what’s going to happen?

Zara: You’ll get punished or they might beat you.

Zara’s comment reveals why some children may not enjoy the ‘leisure’ reading done at school: if a child read with the knowledge that s/he may be punished or beaten at the end of the reading, s/he would not enjoy the reading and would dread it and if possible, avoid it. This may explain why Zara, whose school had a period set aside for leisure reading, stated in her personal interview that she did not do any leisure reading during the school term. It may be that she did not associate the recreational reading she did in school with pleasure. Pennac (2006) asserts that when demands are made of a child, the child stops associating reading with pleasure. These findings from Peter, Mike and Zara support Pennac’s (2006) assertions and provide evidence that when children know that they will be asked questions at the end of either a read aloud session or their personal reading, they may not enjoy the reading.

The participants also talked about having to answer questions on the literature books they were given to read at school. Below is an excerpt from Paul:

Paul: Well, there are these books that we use in my grade that I really like. The books are interesting, but then what makes me not want to read it...is that there are questions at the back and then they always make us answer them.

IA: Are you saying that you don't like books with questions?

Paul: I don't... Well, actually, it's not that I don't like the books, but I don't like the fact that I have to answer the questions.

Paul's comment reveals that even when a child found a book engaging, s/he may not want to read it if demands are made on the reading. In this rather long excerpt from one of the group interviews, some of the participants express how they felt when demands were made of them on their reading:

Onome: And they tell you to write all the new words.

Paul: They make you just wish, "Oh, why did they give me this book?"

IA: Do you like reading the books they give you to read?

Jide: It's boring.

Paul: Some of them are interesting, some are interesting but the questions just make me, they turn me off from reading.

Mike: Yes, sometimes when I read them, I just dodge the questions. I don't answer the questions.

Karen: I also dodge the questions. Because the questions might be too hard and I might skip the questions, go to another page and I'll still see more questions in that new page.

IA: So, what you're saying is, you like reading but once they give you these questions, they take away your interest in reading the book?

All: Yes!

Chidi: I usually dodge the books.

Paul: Actually, whenever my teacher gives me a book to read without asking any questions, I feel like happy because the questions won't disturb me. I'll just be on my own reading the book peacefully.

IA: Do the questions make you feel like you're writing a test?

Mike: Yes, and they make me feel as if I'm judged.

Paul: They make me feel like everything I have to like, write exactly what is in the book.

Chidi: You are supposed to read the books for fun and not to answer questions.

The excerpt brings out a number of salient points. Onome's complaint about being asked to write down all the new words suggests that it was not only being asked questions that the participants disliked; they did not want any demand made of them when they read and this included asking them to write down new words. Paul expresses regret at being given the book to read. This, however, does not indicate that he did not like reading or did not like the book. Jide's comment that "It's boring" may be an indication that knowing that he would have to answer questions, he has adopted an efferent attitude towards the reading and does not anticipate any pleasure. Paul adds that even though some of the books are interesting, the questions turn him off, inferring that they make him lose interest in reading and that he is repelled by them.

Though Mike, Karen and Chidi use the word 'dodge', they use it to mean slightly different things. It appears that by 'dodge' Mike means that he ignores the questions and does not look at them, while Karen means that she skims through them but does not answer them. On the

other hand, Chidi's use of the word 'dodge' indicates that he avoids books that have questions altogether. The comments by Mike, Karen, and Chidi suggest that the only way they could enjoy reading the text was to ignore the questions and act like they did not exist. Also, Mike's subsequent comment suggests that he felt as if he was being assessed, implying that he would read under some sort of pressure and therefore not enjoy the reading. Further, all the children in the group interview were unanimous in the response that the questions took from the pleasure of reading. Chidi's latter comment is quite insightful as it reveals that for him, when reading is accompanied by questions, it is not for pleasure and vice versa. Accordingly, their comments provide evidence that the pedagogy of reading affects children's reading motivation.

It has been suggested by Barrs & Cork (2001) that in the reading of literature in classrooms, emphasis should be placed more on the way a story is told and on the communication of meaning and less on the direct teaching of literary elements. Gordon (2018) suggests a balance between the two. However, Pennac (2006) advocates that children should be allowed to read purely for the pleasure that reading gives rather than as a means of teaching literary skills as doing otherwise would make the child cease associating reading with pleasure, which may have the likely consequence of making the child stop reading. Based on my study's findings, I argue it is possible that many children who do not read much may have been negatively impacted by the pedagogy of reading both at home and in the school. There is therefore likelihood that if there are changes in the pedagogical practices, some children might have more interest in reading and accordingly do more recreational reading.

6.1.2 Choice of Texts Revisited

As stated in Chapter 2, research indicates that the opportunity to choose the texts they read greatly affects children's motivation to read (Clark & Phythian-Sence, 2008). Cremin (2015) argues that volition and agency are crucial in nurturing children's reading engagement, and according to Cremin (2007), children will more likely read books that they have selected for themselves, and books in which they can make meanings and connections. I will therefore explore how the choice of text affected my participants' leisure reading. Because my participants engaged in their own recreational reading in and beyond KBC, my discussion of the choice of texts will focus on leisure reading at KBC, at home, and for participants whose schools had a time set aside for reading, during the reading period in their schools.

6.1.2.1 *Texts Used for Reading for Pleasure at KBC*

All the children said that they always self-selected the books they read at KBC and were free to change the books at any time; I had already observed this as I saw children walk over to the shelves and pick any book at will. Charles said that sometimes a KBC staff member suggested a book to him, and sometimes, he acted on the suggestion and discovered that he liked the book. According to him, “I’m not forced on what book, but they suggest a book, and I can say, ‘No; I don’t want to read the book.’” The children at KBC knew that they did not have to read the book a staff member recommended unless they wanted to; in both individual and group interviews, they all stated that they self-selected the books they read at KBC. In Section 5.1 where I addressed ‘How the 9–12 Year Olds at KBC Read’, I described the reading period at KBC, hence I will not discuss it here. Most of the participants seemed genuinely interested in the books they were reading and had a positive attitude towards reading. From my observation, most participants appeared to enjoy reading; the fact that the children voluntarily discussed the books they read with one another indicates that they found the books engaging. As discussed in earlier sections, findings from their interview and questionnaire data support this. In Gambrell (1996)’s study of literacy motivation in first-, third-, and fifth-grade students, 80 per cent of the participants said that the books they most enjoyed reading were self-selected from the classroom libraries. It may be that children usually enjoy the books they self-select as they are likely to select books they have an interest in, perhaps because of the themes or illustrations or other features in the book. The observed enjoyment of reading at KBC may not be unconnected with the fact that the children always selected the books they read.

6.1.2.2 *Texts Used for Reading for Pleasure at Home*

Most of the study participants said that they self-selected the books they read for pleasure at home. In a few cases, parents suggested books for the children to read and even gave the children specific books to read; however, the children did not mind this as it was not compulsory that they read the books, except in the case of Mike which will be discussed further on in this sub-section. Karen’s mother prompted her to read and sometimes chose the books she read but Karen did not have to read the books her mother chose if she did not like them. Karen did not comment on the books her mother chose for her to read, but Adanna, whose mother also sometimes chose books for her said that sometimes she liked the books her mother chose and at other times, she did not. Adanna always completed all the books she chose herself, but did not always read to the end the books her mother chose.

IA: So, in other words, the books that you pick, you complete them?

Adanna: Yes, I do.

IA: The books that you do not complete are books that were picked by your mom or somebody else. Is that what you are saying?

Adanna: Yes, but sometimes, my mom gets me books that I actually like, but most times, she gets me big novels.

IA: The books that you do not read were not picked by you:

Adanna: No.

The fact that Adanna always read to the end the books she self-selected may be an indication that she had read widely enough and knew her taste in books. Hence, she usually selected books that she expected that she would find engaging. It may also be that when she selected a book, regardless of whether the book lived up to her expectation or not, she felt bound to read it to the end since she chose the book all by herself. There are a few possible reasons why she did not complete the books other people chose for her to read. One reason may be that she may resent the fact that it was chosen by someone else, and her decision not to read it may be her way of expressing this and regaining control of her independence to read what she wanted to read. It could also be that the people did not know her taste in books and chose books that she did not find engaging. The latter reason seems more likely as the acknowledgement that she liked some of the books her mother selected but did not like others, shows that she actually read the books her mother chose even though she did not read them to the end.

Adanna's comment that her mother got her 'big novels' most times also points to the fact that Adanna's issue was not the fact that the books were chosen by her mother, but the fact that the books were 'big novels'. When discussing the texts she liked during her interview, she had said, "I don't like novels as much, but I read novels just because I don't have any other book to read". It was likely that Adanna would have read to the end the books her mother and other people chose for her to read if the books were the kind of books she liked reading indicating that some children may read books selected by other people if they find the books engaging. However, even though Adanna sometimes had someone else choose a book for her, she knew she did not have to read the book unless she wanted to, indicating that ultimately, the choice of what text to read was hers. This was not the case with Mike whose father sometimes chose the books for him to read at home:

IA: Do you like the books that your dad picks for you?

Mike: Not always.

IA: Who decides how long you should read? Your dad, or you decide?

Mike: It's not like I decide how long I should read; my dad often gives me the pages to read.

IA: If you don't like reading it, must you still read it?

Mike: Yes, I must.

IA: And do you usually complete the materials you start reading? Like when your daddy says you have to complete this, must you finish it?

Mike: Yes, I must. Unless my mum asks my dad if they are going out, that's the only time I can leave it. But I must finish it. When I get back home, I must finish it, but if I get back home late, the next day I will finish it.

IA: What if you start reading a book and you don't think it's interesting, you still have to finish it?

Mike: Yes, I must.

As already stated in Section 2.1, RfP requires the reader's volition (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). Mike's comments indicate that his volition was not involved in the 'leisure' reading he does at home, whether in the choice of books or in the duration of the reading. It is no wonder he did not enjoy reading the books:

IA: Would you say you enjoy reading those books that it is compulsory for you to read?

Mike: No.

RfP is undertaken because of the anticipated *feeling of enjoyment or satisfaction* from the activity. Consequently, even though Mike was reading at home, he could not be said to be doing leisure reading as it was not a volitional act and he did not derive pleasure from the activity. This finding from Mike suggests that there may be children who read at home in their leisure time but cannot be said to be doing recreational reading as they are not allowed to exercise their choice in either the decision to read or the choice of texts to read and/or do not enjoy the reading. The absence of choice may impact negatively upon the children and lead them to develop a negative attitude towards reading, especially when their own choices are hampered as was the case with Mike:

Mike: Those (Enid Blyton books) are the books I like reading, but my dad said I shouldn't read them.

IA: Okay, what books does he make, does he give you to read?

Mike: Hard books. For example, one has 152 pages. but one he gave me (and said) I should stop at 100. But it is only one that he picked that I like. That was very interesting.

IA: Okay. Do you remember the one he picked that was interesting?

Mike: Yes, I still have it at home. Bat-Man's Guide to Being Cool.

There is a strong likelihood that by stopping Mike from reading the books which Mike liked and forcing him to read the books he did not like, Mike's father was reducing Mike's potential to engage in leisure reading. There are arguments that people should be encouraged to read what they enjoy reading in whatever format they prefer as doing otherwise may reduce the potential for pleasurable engagement in reading (Cremin, 2015).

It is interesting that the only way Mike describes the books his father gives him to read is ‘hard books’. He does not describe the books by their genre or theme or any other feature; he simply refers to them as ‘hard books’. This suggests that regardless of the genre or other features that the books his father gave him to read may have, Mike found the books difficult to read and comprehend. His voice tone and facial expressions as he spoke about the ‘hard’ books revealed that he did not like the books. It was not likely that he made meanings and connections in these books. Interestingly, Mike remembers the title of the book his father picked that he liked and knew where the book was, indicating that the book was meaningful to him and perhaps he would read it again. This would suggest that Mike was interested in reading, and that given the books he liked, he would voluntarily read more. Based on my knowledge of Nigeria, I am minded to believe that Mike’s father’s actions may have been as a result of his desire to help Mike develop a reading culture. However, it appears that it had the reverse effect. Mike’s collage, discussed on page 85, indicates that he did not consider the reading he did at home to be RfP as the yellow coloured-paper which indicates reading was completely missing from the sections that represented vacation periods in the collage. These findings from Mike support the argument that choice of text is a critical factor in children’s engagement with RfP.

Like Mike’s, Adanna’s father did not approve of all the books Adanna liked reading:

Adanna: I read that (Diary of a Wimpy Kid), but most times my dad said I shouldn’t, so he collects them. He said that these books are fantasy.

IA: So, he doesn’t like you reading fantasy?

Adanna: Yes; novels only, but that (fantasy) is what I like.

IA: So, what do you do? Do you read fantasy then?

Adanna: Well, yes, but when he’s not there.

IA: Has he told you why he doesn’t like you reading fantasy?

Adanna: He said that they don’t teach anything.

IA: Okay, if he allowed you to read fantasy, and you felt free to read fantasy, would that make you do more reading?

Adanna: Yes.

Adanna explained that by ‘teach anything’, her father meant moral lessons. Adanna’s decision to continue reading the books despite her father’s explanation may be because she either was not convinced by her father’s explanation that she should read only the books that taught her moral lessons or she believed that she learned something from the *Diary of a Wimpy Kids* books. It may also be that neither was the case but she enjoyed reading the books so much that she risked incurring her father’s anger should he discover that she disobeyed him and read the books despite his instructions. She did not indicate if her father had read any of the *Diary of a*

Wimpy Kid books. Incidentally, it does not sound like she enjoyed reading novels which is what her father wanted her to read.

The purpose of leisure reading is to get pleasure from the activity (Cremin *et al.*, 2014), and not to learn moral lessons or lessons of any kind though you might do so incidentally. When parents or teachers lose sight of this understanding and make the leisure reading focused on some other purpose, they risk weakening the child's interest in reading. Adanna's admission that she would read more if she was allowed to read fantasy indicates that her father's decision was already impacting on her reading negatively, and it is likely that if this continued, Adanna would lose interest in reading altogether. Adanna and Mike provide evidence that by not allowing children to read the books they found interesting, parents and teachers hampered children's engagement with RfP.

6.1.2.3 *Texts Used for Reading for Pleasure at School*

Most of the participants attended schools that did not have a time scheduled for reading in the school timetable. For most of the children whose schools had a time set aside for recreational reading, the books used for the reading were self-selected by the children, and it did appear that this singular fact affected the children's attitude towards the reading time. For instance, Zara liked the reading time in her school because of the books in her school library:

IA: You like it?

Zara: Yes, because the books we have there none of them are torn. They are very interesting and most of the books there, you just look at it and you want to read it.

Perhaps some of the books Zara had at home were torn; it is also possible that a page or two may have been missing from a book she had picked up to read at KBC as some of the books were old and had been read by many children through the years. If that happened, it may have frustrated her reading experience and may explain why it mattered to Zara that the books in her school were not torn. Either way, her words suggest that the main reason she may like the reading period at school was the freedom to choose the books she read and the fact that the books were not torn and were appealing to her. If that choice were removed and the books were chosen by a teacher or librarian, she may not have liked the reading period. In Ngozi's school there was a one-hour period on the time table that was set aside for quiet sustained reading called ERIC, Everyone Reads In Class. The children self-selected the books they read during this time.

IA: Who picks the book you read during ERIC?

Ngozi: You pick it yourself...sometimes I bring some books from my house and I read it in school. Not only during ERIC; when I'm done with my club I can read it in the car.

Ngozi's words suggest that she enjoyed the reading period and was engaged in it to the point that she took books from her home and read beyond the set time for reading. Her engagement may not be unconnected with the freedom to select and read only the books she found interesting. The excerpt from Mike's interview suggests that the freedom to select the books one reads is so important that even when forced to read, a child might still enjoy the reading if s/he was allowed to self-select the book s/he read:

IA: What about in school, is there any place that you like to stay and read?

Mike: No, umm (not clear), they just force me to read.

IA: They force you to read at school?

Mike: Yes.

IA: Okay, do you enjoy reading at school?

Mike: Yes.

IA: Why? Do you pick the books you read there?

Mike: Yes, I do.

IA: So, which one do you enjoy more, reading at school or reading at home?

Mike: Reading in school.

IA: So, you prefer reading at school. Why?

Mike: Because they allow me pick the book.

Mike's data, discussed in Section 6.1.2.2, revealed that Mike was forced by his father to read 'hard books' at home. Unfortunately, he was also forced to read books at school. Although he might not have enjoyed being forced to read, he liked the fact that he was allowed to select the texts he read at school and this made all the difference to him. This finding supports Clark & Phythian-Sence's (2008) view that choice of text is important and seems to be a motivator for children to read.

Unlike Zara, Ngozi and Mike, Onome did not get to choose the books she read during the reading period in her school:

Onome: I get to choose the books I want to read at home and in KBC but at school, most times they force us to read it. They just give us books like that, then tell you to read it. They give you a time.

IA: During the read aloud period or during the reading period?

Onome: Reading period.

IA: If you don't like the book you are given, can you change it?

Onome: I don't think so because the last time, the book they gave me, I wanted to change it. Many people wanted to change theirs, because most of them were boring, but he said we can't. That we have to read it, do a summary of it, write new words.

IA: What happens if you don't read it to the end?

Onome: They don't ask you if you read it to the end or not. Sometimes we just copy from the back of the book.

Onome's interview excerpt highlights a number of things: firstly, Onome was not against reading, but resented that she and her classmates had no say in the choice of books they were given by the school to read for pleasure. Secondly, Onome and her classmates were certainly interested in reading during the reading period otherwise they would not have sought to return the 'boring' books they were given in exchange for books they found more interesting. Thirdly, Onome's words, "sometimes we just copy from the back of the book" indicate that the students did not always read the books to the end, but sometimes copied the blurb and presented as the book summary. This finding suggests that where children are not allowed to select the books for leisure reading, they may not read the books and thereby supports the arguments that children should be allowed to select the texts they use for recreational reading.

In Section 2.5.2, I discussed the choice of text as a factor in children's reading engagement and made references to studies in the Western world that provide evidence to support this (Clark & Pythian-Sence, 2008; Maynard *et al.*, 2008). As can be seen in the findings in Section 6.1.2, the freedom to self-select the texts used for leisure reading also affects Nigerian children's attitude to leisure reading.

6.1.3 *Reading Aloud Revisited*

Reading aloud has been identified as a key factor in helping children foster a love for reading (Layne, 2009, 2015; Lockwood, 2008). In discussing reading aloud, I talked with the children about their experiences of reading aloud when they were younger, within KBC, and outside KBC. I will therefore discuss reading aloud under these three sub-titles.

6.1.3.1 *Experiences of Being Read to as a Child*

Most of the participants said that they had never had the experience of a parent or anyone reading aloud to them when they were young. For participants like Shehu, Charles, Karen and Peter whose parents read to them when they were younger, the parents stopped reading to them when they learned to read. For instance, until he was about seven years old, Shehu's mother read to him whenever he asked her to read to him. This was on an average of three times a week.

IA: Did you use to enjoy it?

Shehu: Yes, but it's only, I used to love the stories that she will read to me all over and all over again....because it was this fiction...it had all these fictional stories and fairy tales, and she read umm, this story about a big fish that ate an elf's boot then he has been eating all his boots and then he now showed a chart of all the boots that he ate.

IA: So, why did you stop asking her to read aloud to you?

Shehu: Because I can't be 27 years old and I'll be in bed and my mum will be reading.

IA: Would you like it if she read aloud to you now?

Shehu: No, because I can read so...

IA: But don't you think it's still fun having someone read aloud to you?

Shehu: I don't think it's fun.

IA: How did you use to feel when she read aloud to you? Did it make you eager to know...

Shehu: Yea, it made me want to read a lot.

The fact that Shehu does not answer my last question but jumps in with the statement that his mother's read aloud made him want to read a lot suggests that he strongly attributes his desire to read to his mother's read aloud. Years after, Shehu still remembers the details of the stories his mother read to him, suggesting that the experience was not only pleasant, but memorable. Shehu's comment that he would not want his mother to read aloud to him since he could read implies that he thinks reading aloud should be limited to when the child could not read. It may appear that listening to his mother read stirred in Shehu an interest in reading. He admitted that after he learned to read, he-read the story of the big fish that ate the elf's shoes, indicating that the reading aloud his mother did had whet his appetite for the story and for reading (Cliff Hodges, 2011; Layne, 2015).

Like Shehu, Peter's father and mother read aloud to him when he was much younger but no longer read to him.

IA: Did you like it?

Peter: Yes, because they actually taught me like... how to read and gave me the vibe to read.

IA: Why did they stop reading aloud to you?

Peter: Because after that, I learnt how to read.

IA: Okay, I see. Will you like them to still read aloud to you?

Peter: No, because I will like to read the books by myself so I can understand it in my own way.

Peter's statement "actually taught me like... how to read" shows that he believed that he learned to either read or become a reader from listening to his parents read aloud to him. Meek (1988) demonstrates that children best learn reading through having someone read to them 'real' books that they find pleasure in reading, rather than through reading schemes, and Peter's statement supports Meek. Additionally, Peter says that the reading aloud "gave me the vibe to read", meaning that it stirred in him an interest in reading as vibe is used by young people to

mean ‘energy’, ‘interest’, ‘atmosphere’ etc. Peter’s claims may not be wrong, for as previously stated, studies indicate that reading aloud whets the appetite of children for reading (Layne, 2009; 2015).

Although Peter attributes his interest in reading to the early reading aloud sessions he experienced with his parents, he was not interested in having his parents reading aloud to him anymore as he considered it unnecessary since he could read, indicating that like Shehu, he believes reading aloud should be discontinued when the child can read. This view was also communicated by Oluchi, a participant in the pilot study, who had laughed at the idea of her parents reading aloud to her. Strangely, Peter and the other children at KBC did not seem to mind being read to at KBC. For the participants who saw reading aloud by parents as unnecessary once they could read, it may be that their parents read aloud to them while tucking them into bed at night, hence they associated the reading aloud by parents with a childhood pattern, and as they grew older, felt too mature to be read aloud to.

Peter also says that he would like to read the books himself so that he could understand them in his own way. This statement suggests that Peter believes that the understanding he would get from reading a text by himself is different from the understanding he would get from the same text if his parent or someone else read the text to him. This implies that for Peter, the meaning of the words does not solely lie in the text, but in the reading style and the manner in which the text is read. Peter’s view is not entirely strange. Rosenblatt (1978/1994), previously discussed in Chapter 2, argues that the meaning of the text does not lie solely in the written words, but is also dependent on the reader’s experience, such that different people may have different interpretations of the same text. It may follow from this, that in the reading aloud of the text, people may through their voices and mannerisms convey their own interpretation of the text, such that if different people read aloud the same text, they would convey different interpretations of the same text as each person would bring his/her experiences into the reading of the text.

6.1.3.2 *Reading Aloud at KBC*

Reading aloud at KBC has been discussed in Section 5.1.1. Hence, this section will be very brief. 11 of the 15 participants only had someone read aloud to them at KBC; in other words, outside KBC, no one read aloud to them. Odachi said that no-one had ever read aloud to her apart from the reading aloud sessions at KBC. She said that when the book used by a staff

member for reading aloud was interesting, it made her eager to read the book again and she didn't mind re-reading the book many times, but that most times, she did not find the book read interesting. Most of the participants claimed that they enjoyed being read to at KBC, and that the reading aloud made them interested in reading the book.

The group interview question, "If someone starts reading a book and stops midway, how do you feel?" had various responses such as "I feel sad", "I feel interested", "I'll be eager to finish the book", and "I'll pick up the book and continue". The follow-up question, "Do you think that having someone read aloud to you would help you to read more?" had all the participants respond with a chorus, "Yes!". As cited in Section 5.4.3.4, there are examples from Charles and Karen of how the reading aloud by a staff member of KBC had motivated them to read the story the staff member read aloud as well as other stories from the book the staff member had read from.

Paul: What I want to say is that if someone reads a book aloud to me, I would want to continue the book, but the thing is that maybe it's just the way the person is reading it and the place that I am in that makes me really interested in the book.

IA: It may not be the book itself?

Paul: Exactly.

Paul's words are very insightful as they point out that the listener may enjoy the reading aloud, not necessarily because s/he likes the book read, but because s/he enjoys how it is being read and also likes the reading environment (this terminology is explained in Section 2.5.6). It suggests that some children may enjoy reading aloud because of the reader's manner of reading and the reading environment. In Section 6.1.6, I will discuss how the reading environment affected the participants. However, based on Paul's words, I argue that perhaps more children would enjoy reading aloud and benefit from it if the reading aloud is done by an experienced reader and in the right reading environment.

6.1.3.3 *Reading Aloud Outside KBC*

Out of the 15 participants in my study, only Ngozi and Karen reported that someone at home read aloud to them. Ngozi said her older sister read aloud to her; sometimes this made her interested in reading the books, but not all the time. However, as pointed out in Section 5.1.2, Ngozi's sister who completed the parents' questionnaire indicated differently. Karen said that her mother and her brother read to her at home; however, her mother wrote down that nobody read aloud to her. It is possible that Karen's mother read to her when she was younger and

Karen was thinking of those times at the time she responded to the question of who read aloud to her. Accordingly, most, if not all the participants do not experience reading aloud at home.

Most participants said that outside KBC, no-one read aloud to them, but six participants reported that someone at school, usually the class teacher, read aloud to their class. For some, this happened regularly, while for others, the reading aloud was done once in a long while. Zara and Rose said that their class teachers read to the class regularly and she enjoyed it:

IA: If the teacher reads a book to you and he doesn't read it to the end, would it make you want to read the book or it makes no difference to you?

Rose: I will feel like reading the book.

IA: Has there been any time the teacher read a book up to a certain point and thereafter you picked up the book and read it to the end?

Rose: No.

IA: No. Okay, why? Were you not curious to find out how the story would end?

Rose: I wanted to, but they already rang the bell for me to...for us to go home.

Reading aloud whet Rose's appetite for the book, and if the book was available, she could have taken it home and possibly read it. Unlike Rose, Zara gave a different response to why she did not complete reading the book the teacher read and stopped midway:

IA: If the teacher reads and stops at a certain point, would it make you want to go back and finish up the book?

Zara: No.

IA: It makes no difference to you?

Zara: Yes, because if you just read it, and what if the next page she wants to finish it for the whole class, so if you finish it, it will just be boring for you. So it's better for you just to leave it so that you will not have any spoiler alert.

Zara's response reveals that the reading aloud was interesting and exciting to her; her belief that she would find it boring to hear the teacher read if she had already read the book ahead indicates that she found it interesting to listen to the teacher read when she had not read the book. Clearly, she believed that the teacher would continue to read the story on another day, so she chose to wait for the teacher to continue the reading. While it may appear that she was not so excited about the book, it could also be that she was so excited about it that she would rather wait in anticipation than spoil the joy of listening to the teacher read. I believe that the latter is what she refers to when she says, "it's better for you to just leave it so that you will not have any spoiler alert". What this means is that it is not in every case that a child who enjoys reading aloud will search for the book and read when the teacher or reader stops midway. If they know that the reading will be continued, some children might prefer to wait for whenever it is continued. This does not mean that they do not enjoy reading aloud. The above excerpt

was from the group interview; in the excerpt from her personal interview which is below, Zara's response hints at another possible reason why she did not search for and complete the books her teacher read midway:

IA: What about when your friends read the book aloud to you, does that get you interested in the book?

Zara: Hm, yes, because the books that my friends read, I know that I'll like it so it will be interesting to me, but if my teacher gets a book, I might not like the book.

IA: So, do you like people reading aloud to you?

Zara: Only my friends. And sometimes my teachers.

Based on Zara's response, she did not always like the books her teachers read aloud, and her interest in the activity was dependent on how engaging she found the book. She liked the books her friends chose so enjoyed when they read to her, but this was not always the case when her teachers read to her. This gives evidence that even though many children might enjoy reading aloud, for some children, the enjoyment they get is dependent on the book. If the child does not find the book engaging, s/he may not enjoy the activity. Chambers (1993) cautions that despite its possible benefits, reading aloud could bore children and take away the pleasure from reading if the book seems never-ending and requires a memory for descriptive detail rather than for plot-filled action. It is therefore possible that some children may not enjoy reading aloud or its benefits because of the books read to them. However, there are also cases when the child clearly does not enjoy the reading aloud because of the reader, as this excerpt from Peter shows:

Peter: Teachers spoil the books for me... they have destroyed it for me... whenever I read on my own, I give it a kind of feeling... I give it some voices... which makes it better for me... But when they are reading it for me, they would use their own voices which now makes it very useless.

IA: Okay, if they read those books in an interesting voice would it make you more interested in reading them?

Peter: Yes....It also depends on the teacher.

Peter's responses here support my earlier discussion that for him, the meaning of the texts possibly lay in how the texts were read by the reader. He uses very strong and negative words to describe the reading aloud done by his teachers. This indicates that he did not enjoy the reading aloud; however, it was not because of the books used, but because of the manner and the voice used by the teacher(s). Peter gave voices to the different characters and this, I believe, made the characters more real to him, and allowed him to experience the reading in a deeper and more pleasurable way. The finding from Peter indicates that in addition to using suitable and engaging texts for reading aloud, the pedagogy of reading matters; the reader must read in

a manner that is engaging and exciting to the listener. ‘Engaging and exciting’ here does not mean ‘enthusiastic’, as Shehu shows that this may not appeal to some children:

IA: If someone read a book aloud in an interesting way, do you think it would make you want to quickly complete the book or go back and read it?

Shehu: Umm...I think like when they read it in, a like...when they read it in an enthusiastic way, for me now it’s like a little bit cheesy...But before it used to be like very nice.

Shehu found reading aloud done in an enthusiastic way unappealing. It may be that the enthusiasm was feigned by the reader and he saw through it and was put off by it. Regardless, there is a need to read in an engaging manner, and the reader needs to find the balance between being overly excited and exuberant, which may be what Shehu means by ‘enthusiastic’ and being boring.

As I have discussed, findings from my study support that reading aloud has many possible benefits including whetting the listener’s appetite for the book. This shows that reading aloud, which as seen in Section 2.5.3 could stir a love for reading in children in the United States and the United Kingdom, also affects the reading engagement of children in Nigeria. However, as I have also pointed out, for the listener to be engaged, it is important that suitable texts are used, the reader reads in a manner and voice that is appealing to the listener(s), and that the reading be done in the right reading environment. It is likely that many Nigerian children would read more if they had someone regularly read aloud to them in their homes as well as in their schools.

6.1.4 Access to Engaging Books Revisited

Studies indicate that another factor that plays a critical role in children’s engagement with RfP is the access to suitable and engaging texts (Anderson *et al.*, 1985; Lockwood, 2008). The emphasis here is on access to suitable books, and not on ‘engaging books’ per se, and by access to books, I mean that suitable books must be available and easily accessible. Data from my study indicate that access to engaging texts also affected the extent to which the participants read. Nine of the 15 participants gave a negative answer to the question that sought to know if they usually had access to the texts they would like to read, and the other children answered in the affirmative. Shehu was one of the children who reported that it was easy for him to get the books he wanted to read:

IA: Do you usually have access to the materials that you like to read?

Shehu: Yes. Like in the living room, there’s like a whole long cupboard of books and stories.

Shehu had access to engaging texts because there was a large collection of books in his home. As already stated, Shehu was from a well-to-do family, hence buying books would not have been a challenge for his parents. Shehu also said he could get books from his school library; he attended a prestigious and expensive private school that had a well-furnished library. These are Shehu's sources of books, and while they meet his demands for engaging texts, they suggest that children who do not have access to a well-stocked library either at home or in school, may not have easy access to suitable texts.

Apart from Shehu, all the children who responded to the question of access to books with a 'yes' response gave further responses that showed that it was not always easy for them to access the texts they wanted to read. One such participant is Peter:

IA: Is it usually easy for you to get the books you would like to read?

Peter: Yes, it is...I will say that cause the internet has almost everything, and I have internet in my house so I can ... go on the internet and read a book, if I want.

IA: What about if you are looking for a book and you can't find it on the internet?

Peter: But in those cases, I might say it's not easy.

IA: I want you to pick a percentage to describe how easy it is for you to access a book.

Peter: I would say like half of the time, cause not every time.

Peter based his response on the fact that he has access to the internet and "the internet has almost everything". Less than one half of the books that are printed are made into electronic books so the internet does not have 'almost everything'. Even when electronic books are available, access has been proven to be a challenge as I mentioned in Chapter 5 where I discussed the reading of digital texts. Hence, I argue that Peter's basis for saying that it is easy for him to access engaging texts is faulty. Further, when asked to pick a percentage to describe how easy it is for him to get a book, Peter said that half of the time it was easy, indicating that 50 per cent of the time, he could not easily access the books he wanted to read. This response makes me wonder at his initial answer that it was easy for him to get the books he wanted to read. Might it be that he is conditioned to books not being easily accessible so that he regards being able to access books only half of the time as having easy access to books? If that is the case, access to engaging texts may be a major challenge for many children in Nigeria.

Like Peter, Charles initially said that he had easy access to books as he could get books from his school library and his mother would buy books for him if he asked for them; however, he also said in his interview that he liked stories about World War 1, World War 2, Egypt and Greek mythology, and that it was not easy for him to find these stories. Charles' mother was willing to buy the books he liked, but Charles did not always find the stories he liked. This

provides evidence that even when the parents can afford and are willing to buy storybooks for their children, the books are not always available in the market. Chidi also said that it was easy for him to access the materials that he liked as he usually got books from his school library and the library in his home. Further questioned, he revealed that there were books he liked that he could not find in either library, and that he felt sad when he did not find the books he wanted. Additionally, Chidi said that he had seen some books at KBC that he wanted to read but could not read since the books were for sale. As stated in an earlier section, KBC had books which the children could buy. Chidi's statement that he felt sad when he could not get the books he would like to read indicates that he must have had the experience of not accessing the books he wanted to read. He cited as an example of such occasions seeing books for sale at KBC. I do not know if he asked the parents to buy the books for him. It is possible that he did and they did not grant his request. It is also possible that he did not ask them because he felt they may not buy the book(s) for him.

Books are relatively expensive in Nigeria, and even though my study's participants are mostly from middle and upper income families, buying storybooks for children as and when they demand may be a luxury that most of their parents cannot afford. In Nigeria, a storybook could cost anything between N500.00 (£1) to N5,000.00 (£10) or more, depending on the size of the storybook, the quality of the paper used and the book cover. A monthly income of N500,000.00 (£1000) would fall into the middle-income bracket, and while N1,000 (£2) may appear to be a small fraction of the income, when put against urgent needs like rent, feeding, school fees, clothes etc., buying storybooks becomes a luxury that very few families can afford.

Further describing the times he could not get a book he wanted, Peter had said, "In the other time when I can't get it, it's cause sometimes I might check the e-books.net and I will not find the book there, and I will look, I will be looking for it on a website or I'll try and buy it, but in some cases, it might be costly, in some cases it might take long to come by." "It might be costly" indicates that for Peter, the cost of books was also a reason why he did not always get the books he wanted, and I suspect that it may have been why Chidi's parents did not buy the books for sale at KBC for him. Although the high cost of books in Nigeria did not appear often in the data of my participants, as a Nigerian who has lived in Nigeria for many years and is knowledgeable about the people, culture and economy of the country, I know that many parents do not buy books for their children because they cannot afford to buy them. Based on the findings from Chidi and Peter as well as my knowledge of Nigeria, I argue that more parents

would buy storybooks for their children if the books were affordable and inexpensive hence a contributory factor to the inaccessibility of engaging books may be the prohibitive cost of books.

As previously stated, nine participants said that it was not easy for them to access the books they liked to read. Here are some of the interview excerpts:

IA: Do you usually have access to the materials you would like to read?

Zara: If you ask me, I will say no...Because if I want to buy like a comic, it won't be easy for me to find it except for the airport, and you have to wait for a long time for it to get there.

Rose: No. Because sometimes if I want to pick a book, it is always going to be for babies.

IA: Where do you get the books that you read?

Rose: At the book club.

IA: Ok. And outside the book club, is there anywhere else where you get books?

Rose: No

Zara's statement provides additional evidence that even when there is money to buy the text, the text may not be available. According to Rose, however, some of the books she saw were for babies. I believe that what she meant here was that the books were not mature enough for her. This is a bit strange as KBC had books for children of all ages and indeed for young adults and adults, too. I am therefore led to believe that Rose must have been looking in the wrong section for books.

Ngozi also stated that on her first day at KBC, she wanted to read Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* but did not find it; however, I know that there is at least one copy of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* at KBC as I have come across a copy there. Ngozi has stated that this was on her first day at KBC, so I suspect that she probably did not know how books were arranged at KBC and may have been too shy to ask a staff member for assistance. These findings from Rose and Ngozi indicate that sometimes a child may not find the books they want in a library not because the books are not available but because the child may be looking in the wrong sections. Even for highly literate adults, the issue of library skills can prove to be challenging. Therefore, to help children make the best use of library facilities, it is necessary for an adult to guide the child through the different sections of the library and help her/him discover where s/he can find the books that s/he finds engaging.

Rose also reported that KBC was her only source of books; Rose was occasionally given a book from her school library to take home but had no say in the choice of book given to her which may be why she did not consider her school library as a source of books. Sadly, KBC was the only source of books for some other participants too as either their school had no library, or where it had a library, the children did not have access to it. For instance, Caleb said that he had no books of his own, there were no reading materials in his home, and no library in his school. He liked comics and picture books, but it was not easy for him to get these materials as KBC, his only source of these materials, had a limited number of them. Caleb's lack of engagement with RfP may not be unconnected with the fact that he had little access to reading materials as research evidence indicates that access to reading materials plays a critical role in RfP (Anderson *et al.*, 1985; Lockwood, 2008). I will discuss more about the school library, the home library and the public library in Section 6.1.7 where I address the social networks and affordances available to the participants.

The findings above suggest that when Rose, Caleb and other participants in similar situations did not attend KBC, they had no access to books they liked. The larger implication of this is that children whose parents could not afford to register them at KBC or a book club may not have access to engaging materials. Many of the children who had other sources of books in addition to KBC reported that it was not easy to get access to the books they liked. Karen whose sources of reading materials were KBC and her school library, said that half the time, her school library had the books she wanted and half the time, it did not. In the times she did not find the book she wanted, she read other books. Onome who got books mostly from her school library and sometimes as gifts from her mother said that quite often she did not find the texts she wanted to read and had to turn to other books. So did Mike:

IA: What do you do when you can't find the books you would like to read?

Mike: I pick another one. First, I look for it, if I can't find it, then I'll pick another one.

The fact that Karen, Onome, and Mike selected other books to read when they could not find the books they wanted to read indicates that there were other books available, but the books may not have been engaging to the children. On the other hand, they might find something they like, even if they did not expect to. However, if repeatedly they have to make do with books they have no interest in, their interest in recreational reading may wane. Studies on reading indicate that it is important to offer children engaging reading materials from a wide range of genres (Gambrell, 1996; Layne, 2015). When asked if they would read more if they had access

to the texts they liked, my study participants said yes. Zara, whose difficulty in finding comics was earlier mentioned said, “Yes, I think I would read more because I really love comics and if I have time to like go to places where I can buy it, I would definitely read more.” While there is no proof that these children would have done more recreational reading if they always had access to the texts they liked, the probability is high that they would as data indicates that the participants spent much time reading when they had access to texts they found engaging. It is therefore possible that more children would spend more time on RfP if they always had access to the reading materials that they liked.

6.1.5 An Enabling Adult Revisited

Most of the children said that their parents read a lot, though some of the parents did not discuss the books with them. For instance, Zara’s mother read a lot, but it was mostly her daily devotionals and other books too advanced for Zara so she did not discuss the books she read with her. Zara said she sometimes discussed the books she read with her mother, though. Odachi’s mother also read her Bible and devotionals but did not discuss these with Odachi. However, some parents discussed books with the children. Although the parents of nine participants reported that they discussed books with their children, only five participants stated that someone at home discussed books with them.

Among the five participants who had someone at home discuss books with them were Karen and Ngozi who said that the book discussions encouraged them to read books. A possible reason for the discrepancy between the data of the participants and those of their parents has already been discussed in Section 6.1.3.3, that is, the parents and children may have different understandings of book discussions. Where some parents indicated that they discussed books with their children, the children reported that the parents occasionally asked them questions about the books they had read. Book discussions do not put demands on the child and do not seek to know how much the child reads or his understanding of the book. In book discussions, the discussants would share aspects of the book that gripped their attention and their perspectives of the book in a manner that stirs the listener’s interest in the book.

Many of the children stated that their parents regularly bought storybooks for them, and a few reported that they had a large collection of books at home. Among the latter was Charles who also said that his mother usually bought for him the books he desired to read. Some of the parents recommended books to their children to read, and a number of the children showed

confidence in their parents' recommendations. One of such children was Chidi who preferred his parents' recommendations to his teacher's:

Chidi: If they're advising me to read it, I would rather follow my parents because they are the ones that mostly help me in my choice of books.

Chidi also admitted that he trusted his parents' guidance because they knew what books he liked. These findings reveal that although most of the parents may not have all the features of an enabling adult, many of them were supportive of their children's engagement with leisure reading and may have helped to foster in them a love for leisure reading.

A few participants had enabling adults that were non-parents. For instance, Paul's 19 year old brother was an engaged reader who showed much interest in Paul's leisure reading. He introduced Paul to a website where Paul could read free comics and often discussed books with Paul. He also did shared reading with Paul; Paul liked the shared reading and made several positive references to it in his interview. A few participants stated that their teachers read and sometimes discussed the books they had read with the class. Some of them reported that the book discussions made them interested in the books. However, not all the teachers who read discussed books with their students. Additionally, some teachers recommended and suggested books to the children, but it was not all the time that the children found the books recommended interesting:

Adanna: Sometimes, I do find the books interesting.

IA: And other times?

Adanna: No.

This excerpt from Adanna supports Cremin *et al.*'s (2014) argument for teachers to have knowledge of a range of writers and knowledge of children's interests. For the recommendations from either parents or teachers to be meaningful and effective, it is important that the parents and teachers recognize the child's reading interests, and based on this, recommend texts that are suitable and engaging to the child.

The staff members at KBC seemed to have knowledge of the books in KBC. Likewise, they appeared to know the reading interests of many, if not all, the children. In addition to reading aloud to the children which has already been addressed in Section 6.1.3.2, they discussed books regularly with the children and suggested texts to them. Some of the children reported that they

enjoyed reading the books recommended by one staff member or the other. An example is Charles:

Charles: Usually, the books Auntie Lizzy suggests are really interesting, like *The Titanic*.

Unfortunately, for a few participants like Rose, it was only at KBC that they had an enabling adult as neither their parents nor teacher did a lot of reading or showed much interest in their reading. I mention this as a reminder that there are children in Nigeria who are in Rose's situation but may not have the fortune of attending a book club. Chambers (1991) is of the opinion that readers who are learning to read for pleasure need the support of an enabling adult. As discussed in this section, the data from my study indicate that maybe one of the reasons why the children read the way they do is because they have one or more enabling adults in their lives.

6.1.6 The Reading Environment Revisited

This section will address how the participants of my study were affected by the reading environment. Before I discuss how my study's participants were affected by the reading environment, I would like to first of all reiterate what I mean by the reading environment. According to Chambers (1991), the reading environment is made up of the place (setting), the availability of books, time available for reading, interruptions the reader may experience, the mood of the reader, and the attitude of the reader; however, I would like to also include the weather as it is a part of the features of a place and also featured prominently in my data. As I have already discussed how the availability of books affected the participants, in this section, I will focus on how the other elements of the reading environment affected their reading engagement.

When I asked the children to say what things stopped them from reading or completing a book, the subject of the weather came up as one of the factors that prevented them from either reading or completing a book:

Charles: I might stop reading a book apart from it being boring. Like if I am just reading a book, I have to be relaxed and calm, but if I'm relaxed and calm and the NEPA [National Electricity Power Authority] just takes light, it's annoying because like the AC [air conditioner] switches off and it gets hot. So then I have to drop the book and I feel uncomfortable and sticky and hot.

Just before Charles responded, a child had said she did not always complete the books she read because she found some of the books boring. Hence, by his response, Charles is saying that even if the book was not boring, he might stop reading it if the weather condition was not right. He explains that it was important for him to be “relaxed and calm” when reading, and that he could not be in this state when “NEPA just takes light”. For a very long time, electricity in Nigeria was governed and supplied by a governmental organization, the National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA). The acronym ‘NEPA’ has stuck and simply signifies whatever company or organization supplies electricity in Nigeria. The sentence, “NEPA has taken light” means “there is power outage”.

One of Nigeria’s main challenges is electricity supply. Power outage happens often. Charles described a situation where he is reading a book, perhaps in the day time. The AC is switched on and he is relaxed and calm. Then there is power outage and the AC automatically ceases to function. He is forced to stop reading because he feels “uncomfortable and sticky and hot”. This implies that he feels physical discomfort. His use of the word ‘sticky’ suggests that he may be sweating as a result of the unbearable heat. Charles uses the word “annoying” to express his irritation and frustration at the situation. It is doubtful that anyone, child or adult, can concentrate and enjoy reading in a weather condition of 27 degrees centigrade. Naturally, Charles could not continue reading, regardless of how much he may have been enjoying the text.

Charles was not the only child whose reading engagement was affected by the weather condition. In the group interviews, I asked the children if they were in any way affected by the atmosphere of the place in which they read. They gave a ‘yes’ chorus, and many of them spoke of the various ways in which they were usually affected by the atmosphere. Below is an excerpt from one of the group interviews:

Onome: Yes, yes, yes. Like sometimes when it's really hot, I can't think at all. Even in my class, when it's hot and I am doing a maths problem, I just sleep off or something...

Karen: It (the heat) makes your head pound... so you are like, aargh, I can't feel it.

Onome: Sometimes when I read in the parlour my stomach starts paining me.

IA: Why?

Onome: I don't know but that's what normally happens.

Charles: The humid moisture makes your skin feel hot and uncomfortable.... Because like when I went up the stairs, you could see that at my interview, I wasn't just sitting straight, I kept moving because it was hot and I was looking for a comfortable position so the surrounding and the weather can actually affect the level you read on and how you read, if you read fluently or you have to stop and start fanning yourself and wiping the sweat.

IA: So, are you saying that if the surrounding is not comfortable, it will affect your reading or make you stop reading?

Chorus: Yes

IA: Would that happen even when the book is interesting?

Chorus: Yes

Charles: ... what's the point of a book being interesting if you can't read it?

The various comments of Onome, Karen and Charles demonstrate that their reading engagement was adversely affected by the weather. According to Charles, because of the heat, he could not sit straight and sought for a comfortable position during his personal interview. He further elaborates by saying that dependent on the weather, one could read either fluently, by which he means read without any interruption, or break the reading to fan oneself and wipe away sweat. It is common practice for people to use books or any available object that could serve as a fan to fan themselves in hot weather. However, taking frequent breaks from reading to fan oneself and wipe away one's sweat would undoubtedly affect not only how much reading the child did, but how much s/he enjoyed the reading. Charles' rhetorical question, "What's the point of a book being interesting if you can't read it?" implies that he thought that no matter how engaging a book was, it was not possible to read the book in an atmosphere that was uncomfortable.

The months of March and April are the warmest months in the city, and in April 2017, the temperature ranged between 28 and 32 degrees centigrade, with 30 being the average. During my first fieldwork trip, the weather was so hot that I had to regularly take a cold drink to get energized. Although the door and windows were opened whenever there was power outage, the rooms were still uncomfortably warm. Fortunately, the reading period was from 9am - 10am when the weather was cool. As the day progressed, the temperature rose, and when there was power outage in the afternoons, the children were sometimes restless and could not concentrate on the activity at hand. There was a generator at KBC, but it was not usually put on possibly because it had a technical problem at the time and needed to be repaired.

Chambers (1991) argues that where readers read affects how they read and their pleasure, willingness and concentration. These findings from Karen, Onome and Charles support Chambers' assertion that children's leisure reading engagement is deeply affected by the place where they read. If the place is uncomfortable, the children will have difficulty in concentrating on the reading and will not enjoy it. It is also possible that if faced with the same situation repeatedly, they may lose interest in reading altogether. Karen, Onome and Charles provide evidence that children's engagement with reading is negatively affected by the weather and the

constant power outages. It is worth remembering that the children in my study are all from the middle and upper classes. Sadly, in many homes in Nigeria, there are no air conditioners, and even when they are, the regular power outages ensure that people have to stay in unbearably hot places. My data provide evidence that children cannot enjoy reading in such conditions and lead me to suggest that perhaps more children would read more if they had settings that were comfortable.

Onome commented that her tummy sometimes hurt indicating that it had happened more than once, and probably happened every once in a while. It may be that the seats in her living room were not comfortable and when she sat there, she was forced to sit in a position that made her tummy hurt. Layne (2009) argues that it is important for children to have a comfortable space for reading. This comfortable space includes comfortable seats. When Layne built a reading corner with books and comfortable seats in his classroom, he observed that his students were always eager to be in the reading corner. We are not sure of why Onome's tummy hurt when she sometimes read in the living room hence she cannot serve as an example of how the children's readings are affected by the seats they sit on; however, Charles can. In his description of where he read at school, Charles reported that the couch in his class' reading corner could take only four children at a time, and except when he was among the four pupils selected to sit on the couch, he had to sit on his seat and read:

Charles: If it is in school in class time, I have to sit on my seat.... I'm uncomfortable on my seat trying to read because I keep trying to use different positions.

Obviously, Charles could not concentrate on reading or enjoy the book as much as he would if he were in a comfortable position. Constantly seeking to change his seating position would also have been distracting. The fact that Charles brought this up without any prompting showed that it must have made some impact on him. This finding supports Layne's (2009) argument that children need a comfortable space with books and comfortable seats to do recreational reading.

Another factor that affected the children's reading was noise. All the participants said that they get affected by noise in the environment and would prefer to read in a quiet place. As mentioned in Section 5.3, Shehu reported that he could not read in his home in the daytime and only read at night because his house was "really noisy". Even when he had an engaging book, he waited until nighttime to resume his reading. Shehu provides evidence that even when a reader has an engaging book and was willing to read, s/he could not read if the setting was not right. By nature, noise is unpleasant and causes disturbance. It is likely that Shehu may have tried reading

in the daytime and found it impossible to concentrate on the reading because of the noise in the environment. Perhaps the noise affected his attitude to reading, or constantly took his mind off the reading thereby making it impossible for him to concentrate and fully enjoy the book. Data from Mike's interview also indicates that Mike was negatively impacted by unwanted sounds in the environment when he read at home.

Mike: Sometimes I read in my room; sometimes I read in my dining (room).

IA: Which one do you prefer?

Mike: The room. when my sister is watching TV, I won't get distracted.

Mike's comment implies that due to the sound emerging from the TV, he was not able to give his full attention to reading and that his mind repeatedly wandered away from the story he was reading. Consequently, he could not be fully engaged in the reading and could not fully enjoy the story. Mike had the option of reading in his room, but if that option was not available, he may have quit reading after a while. The findings from Shehu and Mike are not strange. Klatte, Bergström, and Lachmann's (2013) paper which provides an overview of research concerning both acute and chronic effects of exposure to noise on school-age children's cognitive performance indicates that noise and noise-induced disruption negatively impact children's reading. I therefore argue that it is likely that more children would read more if they had quiet and comfortable places where they could read.

In his description of the reading environment, Chambers (1991) includes time available for reading. A few participants such as Odachi stated that during the school term they did not do much leisure reading as they had little time available for reading. Zara said she did not do any leisure reading during the school term as she had no time. Usually, children in private schools in Nigeria are given numerous assignments to take home and do during the school term. Depending on the number and difficulty level of the assignments given, a child may spend a good portion of the afterschool period working on the assignment. S/he may therefore be left with little or no time to do any recreational reading. Even when the assignment is done and there is some leisure time left, unless the child is an engaged reader who finds reading enjoyable and relaxing, s/he might choose to do some other leisure activity rather than reading as s/he may be too tired. Findings from my study indicate that when children read when tired, they may doze off. Perhaps if teachers in Nigeria reduced the amount of assignments they give to children to take home and do, children would read more during the school term as they would have more leisure time available. An alternative may be to set reading texts as an assignment

of some kind in order to accord it status, but the danger here is that the reading may no longer be voluntary.

In their responses to the question that sought to know their ideal reading environment, the children gave various responses, some of which are:

Paul: A good environment for me to enjoy reading will have to be like silent, like very silent, and then spacious, and then cold and then comfortable on my bed. I will just be like I am in the book; I am the main character.

Shehu: I think I would like to read in a quiet, in a quiet environment like the park...on like a work day, so no one is there. And then I think that would really open my imagination. Or if I don't have the opportunity to go there, I would just sit in my room where it's quiet.

Charles: The AC will be cool, my bed will just be warm, and I can enjoy the book so well.

Paul's comment reveals that given the right environment, he would be so deeply immersed in the book that he would be imagining that he was the main character in the book. This indicates a very deep level of engagement with the book. Shehu believes that the right environment "would really open my imagination", suggesting a deep level of engagement with the book such that in his mind he may possibly explore what is going on in the book.

Odachi said that she liked to read in a library, which reveals that in addition to the place being quiet, she also would like to have books nearby. It may be that being surrounded by books motivated her to read or it could be that seeing other readers inspired her to read. It is also possible that it was important to her to be able to stop reading a particular book and pick up another at any time, and hence she liked to read in a library as books were available there. For Zara, it was important to have books in the environment, "so that when you finish with the book you're already reading, you can go and get another one". However, the availability or non-availability of books made no difference to Shehu as he said usually read "very big books" that would take a really long time to complete. But Shehu added, "If I'm reading a small book, I would have to be in a place where there's other books", showing that it was also important to him to have another book to move on to when he finishes the current one.

The participants said that sometimes they had the right environment when they wanted to read and at other times they did not. Further, they all said if they had the right environment all the time, they would read more. I will share here two brief interview excerpts that demonstrate how the right reading environment positively affects the reading engagement of children:

IA: If you had an interesting book and a comfortable place would you read more?

Charles: Yes. Because in my school, my homework was to read but I still liked the book so when I was reading it, they said read for 30 minutes. I timed myself... I ended up reading more than 30 minutes, for 40 minutes because of how comfortable and interesting the book was.

IA: If you read in those places [the ideal reading environment he described], do you find out that you tend to read longer than if you read anywhere else?

Paul: Well, I enjoy the book better.

Charles reported that he read for longer than he planned to, because he was in a comfortable setting and had an engaging book. Even if he had the same book, he would not have read for so long if he had been in an environment that was not comfortable. The fact that he read on for longer than he planned indicates that he enjoyed the activity. Paul provides additional evidence of how the reading environment influences the enjoyment a reader gets from reading when he says that he enjoys the book better when he reads in a comfortable environment. These findings indicate that many of these children are readers who have had different reading experiences to the extent that they know what factors affect their reading engagement and attitudes to reading.

While all the participants had a suitable reading environment at KBC, many of them did not have the right reading environment outside KBC. Hence, though these children read, they may have likely done more recreational reading if they always had the ideal reading environment. Further, the findings provide evidence that support Chambers' (1991) and Layne's (2009) argument that the reading environment greatly affects how children read and their attitude to reading. It can therefore be seen that though the context may be different, children in Nigeria are as much affected by the reading environment as are their counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom. Based on these, I argue that perhaps many more children in Nigeria would do more recreational reading if they had the right reading environment.

6.1.7 Social Networks and Affordances that Support Leisure Reading Revisited

In this section, I will examine what social networks and affordances that support leisure reading which were available to the children in my study. Specifically, I will look at the availability of school libraries and public libraries.

6.1.7.1 School Library

All the children in my study attended a school that had a library. However, the size of the school library and the number of books in the library varied and were largely dependent on

how expensive the tuition fee in the school was. The more expensive the school fee was, the more equipped the library was, such that schools that did not charge exorbitant fees were not likely to have very many books in the school library. In addition, the different schools had different rules and policies that governed the students' use of the library, and in some cases, students were either not allowed into the library, or where they were allowed, could not borrow books from the school library. The excerpts below from Adanna's and Odachi's interviews demonstrate the differences in the school libraries:

I.A.: Are there many books in your school library?

Adanna: Yes, there are many.

I.A.: How many? Thousands, hundreds?

Adanna: Millions, the library is like really, really big so you can't count the number of books that are there, but it is arranged shelf by shelf. Like adventures or fantasy or sci-fi.

I.A.: Are children allowed to borrow any book that they want?

Adanna: Yes; they are allowed.

I.A.: Is there a library in your school?

Odachi: Yes; there's a library in my school.

I.A.: And does the library have many books?

Odachi: No, it doesn't have that much...that much books in the library.

I.A.: Are you allowed to borrow the books there?

Odachi: No. I'm not allowed.

It is doubtful that Adanna's school library has millions of books, but it must have very many books which in the eyes of a 10 year old child appears as 'millions'. Also, the arrangement of the books by their genre made it easy for Adanna and other children to easily locate books. By offering the students access to a vast array of books which they could read and take home, and by also providing a suitable environment for reading, Adanna's school library encouraged the students to engage in leisure reading within and outside the school. It is likely that the school library may have contributed to fostering Adanna's love for reading which was earlier discussed in Chapter 4.

Although Odachi does not give us an estimate of the number of books her school library has, her words suggest that there are not many books in the library, implying that it does not provide access to many reading materials. It is also possible that the reading materials present may not be appealing to many of the children. But even if they are, the fact that there are not many books means the library lacks the wherewithal to sustain the students' interest in leisure reading as research indicates that in order to nurture their love for reading, children need to be exposed

to many high-quality books of various topics, genres, and perspectives (Celano & Neuman, 2001). In addition, the library's policy of not allowing children to borrow books was likely to negatively impact upon children's reading as some children may find it frustrating to not be able to finish reading a book they enjoyed, and where this happened frequently, may lose interest in leisure reading and stop reading. Mike did not say much about his school library but reported that students were not allowed to borrow books from the library unless the books had an assignment for the children to do. According to Lockwood (2008), schools that successfully promote reading provide easy access to plenty of suitable texts. Adkins and Brendler (2015) indicate that school libraries can motivate students to read by providing a wide variety of books for students to choose from. Therefore, it is unlikely that the relatively few books in Odachi's school library will motivate the students to read. Additionally, Odachi's school library suggests that even though some schools may have a library, the library may not adequately cater to the literary needs of the children nor do much to foster their love for reading.

Chidi's school library may have had more books than the library in Odachi's school, but the children did not have access to all the books in the library:

Chidi: From the library I pick the books only on the shelves. They are up to eight shelves and we are only allowed to pick books from the four shelves here; all the remaining we are not allowed.

I.A.: Ok. Are you allowed to look at them at all?

Chidi: No...In school, I read on the table. I don't read in the library because there are no chairs.... There are chairs in the library, but they are only if, when we have classes for library, as in for example now we have Maths and English, in our school we also have Library as a subject.

I.A.: In school where do you read?

Chidi: In school, I usually don't read the books I borrow in my class...And for the Year 5's, we borrow books only on Thursdays ...From 2 0'clock to 2.30; once it's 2.30, you are not allowed to borrow books again. So, you have only 30 minutes of borrowing books.

I.A.: Okay, is there anywhere in school where you can read?

Chidi: Mm, probably not.

I.A.: What about the class?

Chidi: No, except for those who are doing after school lessons. They can borrow books, then they read it till time for the after-school lesson.

I.A.: Oh, so there's no where you can stay quietly to read in the school?

Chidi: No, you have to take it home.

Chidi did not say why the students were not allowed to look at or select any of the books in the four restricted shelves in the library and he did not appear to know what books were in those shelves. It is difficult to understand why the students were not allowed to look at the books nor select any of them to read. Perhaps the shelves had extra copies of the books that were on the

unrestricted shelves and the school thought it best to keep them away from the children and use the extra copies to replace any of the books that may get either torn or lost. It is also possible that the books were textbooks ordered and kept for another school session. Whatever the reason may be, by not allowing the students access to certain shelves, the school was inadvertently teaching the children not to explore every area in a library, and thereby limiting their curiosity to seek out new books that may interest them. Loh *et al.* (2017) list making books visible as one of the five strategies that could be used to build a reading culture through the school library.

Some children enjoy looking around in the library, and it is in the process of looking in the different sections and at different books that they may fall in love with books or come across a book that whets their appetite for reading. It is possible that some children in Chidi's school may have preferred the books in the restricted area of the school library to the books they were allowed access to. The purpose of having books in the library was defeated as the children were not allowed to look at them nor read them. Therefore, the school's policy of restricting students to certain sections in the library may be negatively impacting upon some students' interest in books and reading. It is also odd that there was no provision for children to sit and read in the library or in the school. Miller (2009) argues that creating a dedicated reading corner (or lounge) sends the message to students that reading is important. Based on Miller's (2009) argument which is supported by Layne (2009), by making no provision for the children to read in either the library or the school, Chidi's school may be sending the message to its students that RfP was not important.

There is a library in Rose's school, but she has never been there. She and her classmates are not allowed into the library and she does not know if any student is ever allowed in there. Once a month or thereabout, the headmistress selects books from the library and gives as she wills to students to borrow. The students have no say in what books they are given to read:

I.A.: What if you don't like the book that she picks for you? Can you change it?

Rose: Sometimes I manage it, sometimes I don't read it.

I.A.: Sometimes you don't read it. And can you tell her, "Please, may I have another book?"

Rose: No.

I.A.: You can't. You just have to take the book she gives you?

Rose: Yes.

I.A.: Wow; OK. So what happens when you don't like the book? What do you do?

Rose: I don't read them.

I.A.: Ok. So, you can't borrow books from the school library except what you are given?

Rose: Yes.

In Section 6.1.2, I already discussed choice of text and addressed how the students' motivation to read was adversely affected when they were not allowed to select the texts they read. Rose's data supports the argument that children may not read the books they do not self-select. According to Lewis (1998), the main function of most libraries is "to make the artifacts that contain information – books, serials, newspapers, and their derivatives – easily and conveniently available to individuals in organizations and communities" (p. 192). For a library to fulfil this purpose, not only must the library have artifacts that contain information, but people must have access to the materials in the library. Even though Rose's school has a library, the students do not have access to the books there hence the library cannot be said to serve the main function for which libraries exist. This finding suggests that not all school libraries may serve the function of making reading materials easily and conveniently available to people.

Loh *et al.* (2017), mentioned in Section 2.5.7, indicate that school libraries could be used to encourage children to read and build a reading culture by curating the book selection for readers, making books visible, creating programmes to excite readers, designing spaces for reading, and creating an ecology for reading. Analysis of my data reveals that none of my participants attends a school where all five of these strategies are adopted or used, even though a few schools may have adopted one or more. On the other hand, data from the children's interviews show that in many instances, the policies that govern the use of the library in the different schools worked against motivating the children to read. When asked if the schools organized activities such as author visits, all but one participant responded in the negative. Data also show that in some of the school libraries, there were no spaces designed for reading. It therefore appears that though school libraries have the potential to encourage children to read and build a reading culture, in the schools my study participants attended, this potential was yet to be fully activated and realized. It is possible that many children would be motivated to read more if the library in their school adopted strategies that could help the children become better engaged readers.

6.1.7.2 *Public Libraries*

There is evidence that public libraries play a crucial role in nurturing children's love for reading and their development of a reading culture (Celano & Neuman, 2001). In addition to exposing children to great quantities of a wide variety of high-quality books of various topics, genres, and perspectives, many libraries offer literary activities such as author readings and summer reading groups which nurture children's interests in reading and in books (Krolak, 2005).

Celano & Neuman (2001) point out that public libraries also help to close the book gap between children of different backgrounds by providing all children with access to high-quality reading materials. Unfortunately, 14 of the 15 children in my study have never been to a public library and report that they do not know of any public library. Here are a few excerpts from their interviews:

I.A.: Is there any library in your community or your neighbourhood?

Paul: No.

I.A.: Okay; do you know any public library where you can borrow books?

Paul: No.

I.A.: Do you know any public library around? Have you been to any?

Shehu: I don't think. No, I don't know.

I.A.: Okay, has any of your siblings been to a public library?

Shehu: No. They normally order books online.

I.A.: Is there a public library near to where you live where you could also borrow books or read books?

Onome: No.

I.A.: Do you know of any public library?

Onome: I don't know of any.

There is a public library in the city where this study was conducted, and I visited it some years ago. At the time I visited it, it was very dusty and was in a dilapidated building. The library did not have many books, and the few books it had were old and worn-out and looked unappealing. There were a few people in the library at the time I visited. The librarian was not friendly and was unwilling to offer any assistance; it did not look like he had any interest in the job, or even in books or reading. Unfortunately, as much as I desired to, I could not visit the library during my field trips because of my schedule. A reporter's account, as recent as June 2018, reveals that the library in Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, is in a similar condition (Iroanusi, 2018). The report which has several photos of the inside and outside of the library describes the library as being characterized by dilapidated facilities, outdated books, and other anomalies.

In the many years I lived in Abuja, I never heard of any literary activity that was organized by, or held in the library there. Similarly, on the website of the national library, under news and events, there are reports of: staff training in modern library practice, introduction of online application software for ISSN/ISBN acquisition, promises to automate the library, a report of the chairman of the library board urging Nigerians to read, and other similar reports (National

Library of Nigeria, 2018a). However, there is no news of any literary activity or event that the library has held or plans to hold. The photo gallery of the website has photos of visits made by the librarian to different places where he meets with adults and photos of the national library association annual conference but no photo of any literary activity or any event with children or young adults (National Library of Nigeria, 2018b). These strongly indicate that even the national library may not have any literary programmes or activities. It is possible that many adults may not even be aware that there are public libraries in some cities in Nigeria. This may well explain why most of the participants did not know that a public library existed – their parents had never taken them there as they either were not aware that it existed or did not think the public library had anything to offer. Adanna, the only participant who had visited a public library had this to say about it:

I.A.: Do you know any public library here or anywhere?

Adanna: National library?

I.A.: Okay; have you been there before?

Adanna: Yes.

I.A.: Okay; did you find a lot of books there that you like?

Adanna: Yes, many.

I.A.: Are there a lot of books for children at the national library?

Adanna: Well, some. There are some books for children.

I.A.: But not that many?

Adanna: No.

Although Adanna said she found many books that she liked at the library, she reported that she had only visited the library once, and that it was a while back. It did not appear that she missed visiting the public library as she did not indicate she had any intention of visiting there again. This suggests that even though her experience at the library was positive, it was not attractive enough to make her return. Her use of the word ‘some’ to describe the number of books in the library indicates that she did not think the library had that many books; she reported that her school library had millions of books. Data on the public library suggests that where they do exist in some Nigerian cities, they do not have great quantities of a wide variety of books for children, and do not offer literary activities that will expose children to books and give them opportunities to read more.

The implication is that the children in my study do not have the opportunity of benefitting from the many literary exposures and experiences that a public library could offer and have little or limited social networks and affordances that nurture and support their leisure reading. If these children who are mostly from upper income families have such limited affordances, then it is

likely that children from middle and lower income backgrounds will have no affordances or structures that support leisure reading. Whilst there are repeated assertions that Nigerian children do not read, not much has been said or written about the factors that affect their reading engagement nor what affordances exist to nurture and support their leisure reading. Although evidence points to the fact that the children in my study read, it is possible that they would be more engaged readers if there were public libraries that provided them with many different books of different genres and organized literary programmes such as the summer reading challenge which provide exciting opportunities for children to read more.

6.2 Chapter Summation

This chapter addressed the third research question which examined the factors that affect the extent to which the participants of my study read and what social networks and affordances that support leisure reading were available to them. I used evidence primarily from the participants' interviews and also from their questionnaires and my observations to show the various ways and extent to which the participants' engagement with RfP was affected by the pedagogy of reading, choice of text, reading aloud, access to books, an enabling adult and the reading environment. This implies that the factors that affect children's engagement with RfP in developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom are very relevant in Nigeria. Findings indicate that even though all the participants were in some way affected by these factors, the extent to which they were impacted differed. Using the analysed data, I also addressed what social networks and affordances that support leisure reading were available to the participants. In Chapter 7 which is the last chapter of this thesis, I will state what contribution to the field this work is making and why it matters, address the strengths and limitations of this study, and make suggestions that future studies may possibly address.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

7.0 Introduction

In this thesis, I have explored leisure reading in a group of 9–12 year olds in a book club in Nigeria, and examined how, what, when and why the children read for pleasure when they choose to read both within and outside the book club, and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP. Among the factors that affect their engagement with leisure reading, I examined what social networks and affordances that support leisure reading are available to this group of children. While there have been case studies on reading related topics in Nigeria as discussed in Section 2.6.2, my research differs from the other studies in the following ways: firstly, my study participants were much younger; secondly, my study explored the extent to which the children read and the factors that affected their engagement with RfP; and thirdly, my study was in-depth and gathered data through the employment of four different methods whereas the other studies used only questionnaires to collect data with the exception of Oribabor (2014) who used questionnaires for data collection from the students, and employed guided interviews and discussions to gather data from the teachers.

My analysis of the data was guided by my constructionist epistemological stance and interpretivist theoretical perspective both of which enabled me to see the data as texts that needed interpretation and to construe the meaning of the participants' reading engagement from the findings of my study rather than from already formed beliefs or generally-held perceptions. As mentioned on page 51, Geertz highlights the importance of going beyond capturing and recording facts to interpreting the facts, and aware of this, I did not only describe the data I collected, but interpreted them in my analysis. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I addressed research questions 1, 2 and 3 respectively, analyzing the data from my study to come up with findings on which I base my arguments. In the said chapters, I also linked my findings and arguments with the literature review and already existing arguments in the field. This chapter, which is the seventh and last chapter of this thesis, will state what contribution to the field this work is making and why it matters. It will also address the limitations of this study as well as make suggestions that future studies may possibly address.

7.1 Contribution to the Field

As I already stated, my primary interest in carrying out this study was to reveal the extent to which this particular group of children read and the factors that affect their engagement with

RfP so that parents and educators could think about ways to nurture and support the leisure reading of children in Nigeria. While there are some studies on reading in Nigeria, the studies have had as participants students in secondary schools and universities and have not explored the extent to which the participants read nor the factors that affect their engagement with RfP. This study therefore addresses a gap in the literature on reading in Nigeria by providing insights into how some young children of primary school age in Nigeria read and the key factors that influence their reading motivations and engagement. In addition, my findings bring to the fore the issue of the pedagogies of reading in Nigeria and challenge some of the prevalent forms of teaching and organizing reading for children in Nigeria by revealing that some of the practices which the participants say are commonly used by parents and teachers to make children read more may actually be discouraging the children from reading. My data indicate that the children in my study are likely to be more motivated to read for pleasure if the pedagogies of reading at home and in schools are changed in fundamental ways. Thus, in addition to addressing a gap in the literature on reading, this study throws up thought-provoking insights that may help some parents and educators gain better knowledge of how children read, and also offers evidence-based recommendations on ways that children could be helped to enjoy leisure reading so that they voluntarily choose to read again and again.

7.2 Implications of the Study

The reading habits of Nigerian children have been of concern to parents, educators and various stakeholders in the field of education. Therefore, in this section, I will highlight some of the issues that stakeholders could consider by addressing the implications of my findings on how leisure reading is done at home and in schools, as well as implications for policy-makers. Although I did not set out to address policy-makers' approaches to reading, some of the findings of my study have what I consider to be implications for policy-makers in Nigeria and necessitate me to address these, even if briefly.

7.2.1 Implications for Leisure Reading in the Home

Klauda (2009) indicates that parents' support of recreational reading plays a role in developing and sustaining reading motivation in adolescent children, and Baker (2003) writes that "...supportive home environments foster motivation for reading, which leads to more frequent voluntary reading, which improves reading achievement" (p. 87). My findings suggest that some Nigerian parents probably recognize that they have a role to play in helping their children

develop a love for reading and may be seeking to help their children develop a reading culture which is why they make their children read at home (Mike is a good example of this) and why they may send their children to KBC. However, they adopt practices that demotivate their children from reading, such as selecting the texts the child reads and/or forcing the child to 'read for pleasure'. This may not be unconnected with the parents' understanding of the purpose of leisure reading. Baker, Scher, and Mackler (1997) write that:

The beliefs held by children's parents about the purposes of reading and how children learn to read relate to children's motivations for reading. Parents who believe that reading is a source of entertainment have children with more positive views about reading than do parents who emphasize the skills aspect of reading development (p. 69).

The implication is that parents who see leisure reading as a tool for academic improvement and achievement are likely to raise children who may appreciate reading more for its utilitarian values than for the pleasure it gives. Such parents may not be able to help foster a love for reading in their children. Therefore, for parents to help their children enjoy reading, they may need to resolve that the purpose of the leisure reading is the anticipated pleasure the child gets from reading, that and that alone; every other benefit, including academic achievement, should be secondary and should not become the driving motivation for the reading.

Insights from my study into how, what, when and why the children read and the factors that affect their leisure could help parents reappraise leisure reading practices at home:

- Children love to read a variety of materials including cartoons and illustrated books but have individual preferences. It is important for them to have access to many reading materials especially those that they like. Do our children regularly have access to the books that they would like to read?
- Children prefer to self-select the books they read for pleasure and cherish the freedom to stop reading any material at any time. Do our children self-select the books they read at home and are they at liberty to stop reading any book at any time?
- Children read better when they are in an environment that is quiet and conducive to reading. Do we provide the right environment for reading in our homes?

- Children may be motivated to read more if they have an enabling adult in their lives. In what ways do we encourage our children to read more, and are there additional ways we could do this?
- Children's motivation to read may be developed when older children read to them. Do we encourage older children to read to their younger ones?

These questions, framed from findings on the factors that affect the reading engagement of the children in this study, could provide pointers to what reading practices in the home may help foster a love for reading in children. The findings lead me to suggest that perhaps the reading habits of children in Nigeria would be strengthened and nurtured if parents and teachers paid closer attention to their leisure reading, provided them with reading materials from a wide range of genres, and actively promoted reading activities such as book discussions with children.

7.2.2 Implications for Leisure Reading in Schools

Lockwood (2008) indicates that there is much that schools and teachers can do to foster a love for reading in children. As previously mentioned, studies suggest that the reading habits of children are influenced by factors such as the methods of teaching literature in school (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994) and the teacher's interest in reading (Layne, 2009). Westbrook (2013) demonstrates that teachers can increase the motivation to read in students including the low-attaining ones and Francois (2015) provides evidence that by adopting certain strategies, a school can motivate its students to read more. Whilst my study did not focus on leisure reading at school, its findings suggest that the children's attitudes towards reading and motivation to read are greatly affected by the reading practices in their schools:

- Children prefer that RfP is done with no demands made on them. The anticipation of being asked questions, either to test their comprehension and literary skills or to provide evidence that they read the material, greatly lessens the pleasure of the reading experience. What happens if we require children to answer questions on the materials they read for pleasure? Might it spoil their pleasure?
- Children need a comfortable and quiet place to read at school as the reading environment can greatly influence the reading experience. To what extent do children feel comfortable reading at school? Are there things we could do to make our classrooms more comfortable for leisure reading?

- Children need access to a wide variety of engaging texts as well as the freedom to select any text they choose to read. Are our school libraries stocked with a variety of texts that appeal to children of all ages? Do the children have access to the books in the school library? Are they allowed to self-select books from the school library?
- There should be time set aside for leisure reading in schools as this will communicate the message that reading is important and, additionally, create opportunities for children to read at school. What might we do to create more opportunities for children to read at school?
- Children's attitudes to reading can be positively influenced through book talks and recommendations given by teachers who have knowledge of children's literature and the nature of reading and interest in the young readers. To what extent are our teachers equipped and motivated to help children to become better engaged readers?
- Some children enjoy reading digital texts and are likely to become more engaged readers if digital reading is encouraged within and outside schools. Do our schools recognize and actively encourage digital reading? For schools that have the means, do the materials provided for children's leisure reading reflect some children's preferences for digital texts?

As in the previous section, the above questions are derived from the findings on the factors that affect children's leisure reading in school and could help schools to identify what strategies may be used to get children to become more engaged in leisure reading.

7.2.3 Implications for Policy-Makers

My findings have numerous implications for policy-makers, but in my opinion, the most urgent are the need for public libraries in Nigeria and the need for provision for reading in the national curricula. Although I discussed digital reading and its potential to nurture a love for reading in Section 2.3, I am reluctant to recommend a policy for it for two key reasons. Firstly, most primary school children in Nigeria do not have a laptop, tablet, phone or any device through which they can read digitally, and given the present economic circumstances in Nigeria, most parents cannot afford to buy any of these devices for their children. Considering the limited resources Nigeria has and the various infrastructural challenges it faces, it is not likely that the government will provide the resources needed for digital reading in schools. Secondly, weighed against the pressing need for public libraries and school libraries, the argument for the provision of materials for digital reading pales into insignificance.

In Section 2.5.7, under the subheading, Social Networks and Affordances that Support Leisure Reading, I discussed at length the role that community libraries play in nurturing children's love for reading and their development of a reading culture. Findings from my study indicate that the absence of public libraries negatively impacts on the extent to which children read for pleasure. Considering the fact that the purchase of storybooks is a luxury that a small fraction of Nigerians can afford, a public library would act as a leveler of some sort by making reading materials available to children from all backgrounds. In addition, it would provide a suitable environment for reading and through literary programmes that could be organized at the library, encourage children to spend increased time with books.

Also, there should be time set aside for reading in schools. Based on findings from her study which examined the effect of school activities on reading practices, Manresa (2018) argues that “despite the fact that reading tends to decrease with age, all students read more when there is school intervention, provided it is not sporadic” (*ibid.*, p. 133). According to Manresa (2018), the teaching of literature in the classroom could be improved and the tension around school reading reduced if there is provision for leisure reading time at school, a time during which individuals may choose which texts to read and may stop reading a book that does not meet their expectations. Lockwood (2008) and Francois (2015) give further evidence that children tend to read more when there is provision for independent reading in the curricula, and findings from my study support this.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

Although my study reached its aims, it had a few unavoidable limitations due to the nature of the study design. The first limitation was that the location of the study and the time limit did not allow me to explore in greater depth the participants' sociocultural backgrounds and their experiences of reading at home especially in their early years. According to Baker *et al.* (1997), children are more likely to develop a predisposition to read frequently and broadly in subsequent years if their early encounters with literacy are enjoyable. Both Baker (2003) and Sénéchal & Young (2008) suggest that parents play a key role in children's literacy development and that a supportive home environment nurtures a child's reading motivation which leads to frequent leisure reading. Therefore, a deeper exploration of the participants' sociocultural background, their early reading experiences and their home environment would have probably have given me a better understanding of the children's engagement with RfP and their motivations for reading. However, to do this would have required more time and

would have necessitated stepping out of the unit of the study to visit the participants' homes to observe their reading practices at home and their parents' involvement with their readings. Nevertheless, from the children's interviews and the questionnaires for parents, I managed to ascertain a little of the parents' attitudes to, and support for, their children's reading.

Another limitation of my study, which may be considered a strength in some way, but needs to be highlighted nonetheless, is that the fact that the study took place in a book club means that the participants were in an environment that supports leisure reading. Adkins & Brendler's (2015) review of the PISA reading results suggests that libraries motivate students to read by providing a variety of materials and a supportive environment for literacy and reading conversations. Whilst KBC is not a library per se, it has some features of a library such as the provision of a variety of reading materials and an environment that fosters reading. Therefore, it follows that the participants may have done more leisure reading during their time at KBC than they ordinarily would have done if they had not been at KBC during the said period, implying that the location may have positively affected the degree to which the participants read. It is therefore possible that the findings of the study, especially those on the extent to which the participants read during the vacation periods spent at KBC, may have been different if this study had been conducted with the same participants during the same period but in a different location, notably outside a book club or print-rich environment.

A third limitation that I would like to point out is that conducting the study at KBC with participants who were primarily there with the aim of participating in the activities of the book club suggests that many, if not all of the study's participants, were children who most likely enjoyed RfP. Although there is the possibility that some of the children who attended the book club may have been there because their parents thought it a worthwhile way for them to spend their vacation period, from my observation, all of the children at KBC seemed to enjoy the time they spent at KBC, and most of the participants appeared to genuinely enjoy reading. Therefore, another limitation of my study is that the findings are reflective of children who may already be very much interested in leisure reading and to an extent, are already engaged readers.

Finally, a fourth limitation of my study is that all the participants were children from high socio-economic backgrounds who live in an urban area and attend private, fee-paying schools in a city. The implication of this is that these children have more access to reading materials and social networks that foster leisure reading than the average child in Nigeria. The social networks and resources available to children from lower socio-economic backgrounds who

attend public schools and children who live in rural areas may be very different from what is available to my study participants. Hence, the contribution of my research is limited in that it may not be applicable to all the children in Nigeria. However, as previously pointed out, the limited resources and social networks available to these group of children who are from privileged backgrounds will give an idea of what resources are likely to be available to children from less-privileged homes. Also, the study could be adapted for further research with children in rural areas, children who attend public schools and children from poor backgrounds as will be further discussed in the next session.

7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The overarching aim of this study was to throw more light on Nigerian children's engagement with RfP and the factors that affect their leisure reading. While I recognize the limitations of my study, I believe that I have largely achieved the aim of this research by showing the extent to which a group of children read and capturing a sliver of the complexities that underpin their reading experiences. However, the limitations identified in the preceding section suggest gaps that could be explored in future studies. Future research could also address why religious materials which were common in the homes of many participants, were read by very few participants, and why participants who voluntarily read them did not include the readings among the leisure reading done.

As already pointed out, the reading environment provided by the book club may likely have influenced how much reading the children did. I would therefore recommend constructing the same study with similar participants in a different location, one that does not provide an environment that supports RfP. Findings from this new study could show the extent to which my study's findings were affected by the reading environment provided by KBC, and more importantly, would give useful insights about how children read in locations that are not set up to support reading. Book clubs are not very common features in Nigeria and hence, the vast majority of children in Nigeria have never been to one. Conducting a similar study outside a book club will therefore give further understanding of how the majority of children in Nigeria read during the vacation periods.

Building on the framework of my study, future research could also explore reading among children who are aliterates, that is, children who are able but unwilling to read, and have no interest in spending their vacation periods in reading activities. To what extent do this group

of children read for pleasure, if they read at all? What are their motivations for reading if or when they do read? A study that is focused on aliterate children with the aim of exploring their attitudes towards reading and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP would broaden and deepen the knowledge of how children in Nigeria read and perhaps indicate strategies that may foster a love for reading for children who may not be engaged readers.

Even though this research was rigorously carried out, the findings cannot be generalized as the participants represent only a portion, a small one at that, of Nigerian children. Further research focusing on children who attend public schools and/or children who live in rural settings is recommended. Children who come from less privileged backgrounds than my study's participants will probably have fewer of the social networks and affordances that support leisure reading than my study's participants do; however, it is still important to examine and know what specifically is available to these children in order to understand their reality and come up with strategies that will have positive impact on them, too.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

I began this study seeking to understand whether the group of children in my study read, the extent to which they read, and the factors that affect their engagement with RfP. My in-depth exploration of their reading habits has shown that contrary to the generally-held belief that Nigerian children do not engage in leisure reading, the children who participated in my study do read for pleasure in varying degrees. While they appreciate reading and the potential benefits it offers, their motivation to read is often dependent on several intertwining factors. Chong (2016) argues that aliteracy "is less about not reading than it is about choice, agency and context" (p. 14) and that there are complexities that may obstruct the able reader. Although the children in my study do not fall into the group of children that may be called 'aliterates', my study supports Chong's argument as findings indicate that the participants' motivation and choice to read were often influenced by factors outside their control, factors such as the reading environment and the choice of text. In addressing Nigerian children's engagement with RfP, it is important to look into and address the dynamics that influence the children's reading choice and agency. In this report, I have provided insights into some of the factors that affected the participants' engagement with RfP and also discussed the implications for children's reading experiences at home and in the school. I hope that these insights will lead parents and educators to consider pedagogies of reading and adopt practices that will encourage children's appreciation of reading. This, I believe, will help more children in Nigeria to engage more in

RfP and, ultimately, lead to a strengthening of Nigeria's education system and an improvement in student attainment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A (Information and Consent Form Sheet for the Director of Krown Book Club)

My name is Isang Awah and I am a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, UK. I am carrying out research for my Doctoral thesis on the topic ‘Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria’. The purpose of this document is to inform you about my research and request your consent to allow me to carry out my research in your book club, Krown Book Club (KBC), for a period of six months (during the vacation periods for the second and third terms in 2017). As I informed you during our telephone conversations, I am looking to have 9–12 year olds who attend KBC in the afore-mentioned periods as the main participants in the research. I therefore request access to the children in this age bracket, and the KBC staff.

The aim of the study is to understand how, what, when and why children in Nigeria read for pleasure, and the factors that affect their engagement with reading for pleasure. It is hoped that this understanding will lead to strategies that will help Nigerian children to become more engaged readers, and also provide evidence of the link between reading and attainment. The Krown Book Club (KBC) has been chosen to participate in the project because it strongly promotes reading for pleasure, and can, through its vacation programme, provide the opportunity for me as a researcher to interact with children and collect in-depth data on their engagement with reading for pleasure.

My research will involve interviewing the participants, observing their reading habits, having them make a collage of their leisure time activities, and having them complete questionnaires. To help me get a broad picture of the participants’ engagement with reading, questionnaires will also be administered to participants’ parents and the staff of KBC. KBC staff will be interviewed, too. The interviews will be audio-recorded, and notes will be made of my interactions with all the participants.

There are no anticipated risks associated with this research. There are no monetary benefits for KBC or the participants. However, participation will contribute to the knowledge of the reading habits of children in Nigeria. The identity of both KBC and all the participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. My research will be shared with my supervisor and advisor who are academics at the University of Cambridge, and with the examiners of my PhD dissertation. Outcomes from the study may be shared in academic or educational contexts in the form of a conference presentation or an article in an academic journal, but all names will remain anonymised. If you would like any further information about the research, please get in touch via the contact details that are given below. Otherwise, I would be most grateful if you would complete and return the attached consent form.

Thank you for agreeing to have me carry out the research at KBC. I look forward to what promises to be an exciting and worthwhile fieldwork experience at KBC. Many thanks for your help.

Isang Awah

Tel. Nos: +234 803 704 4434 (Nigeria); E-mail: iua21@cam.ac.uk

KBC'S DIRECTOR CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I agree that the said project may be carried out at KBC, and that the KBC staff, the 9–12 year olds who attend KBC, as well as their parents, may participate in the project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that any participant is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. ☐
3. I agree that the researcher will be given access to the participants. ☐

Name of Director

Date

Signature

APPENDIX B (Information Sheet and Consent Form for the Parents of 9–12 Year Olds in the Krown Book Club)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria

Your child is being invited to take part in a research project on Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria, taking place as part of the Krown Book Club (KBC)'s vacation activities. Before you decide whether or not you would like your child to take part, it is important to understand why the research is being done, and what it will involve. I would therefore be grateful if you would kindly read through this.

The purpose of the study is to understand how, what, when and why children in Nigeria read for pleasure, and the factors that affect their engagement with reading for pleasure. It is hoped that this understanding will lead to strategies that will help Nigerian children to become more engaged readers, and also provide evidence of the link between reading and academic achievement. The KBC has been chosen to participate in the project because it promotes reading for pleasure, and will afford the opportunity to interact with children and collect in-depth data on their engagement with reading for pleasure. Your child's participation will involve making a collage of his/her out-of-school activities, being observed during the reading sessions, answering questions in semi-structured interviews (group and one-on-one), and completing a questionnaire. The interview and questionnaire will have questions that address the participants' out-of-school activities, reading habits, and the factors that affect their engagement with reading for pleasure. The interviews will last for about 30 minutes and will be audio-recorded. Your child may choose not to answer any questions that s/he does not want to answer.

The reading sessions are regular activities at KBC which are beneficial to the children. However, it is up to you to decide whether or not your child takes part in the accompanying research project. If you decide you do not want him/her to take part in the project, it will not mean withdrawing from the reading sessions, just from collage-making, interviews and questionnaires, and from any use of their work for research purposes. If you decide s/he can take part, you are still free to withdraw her/him from the project at any time, without needing to give a reason. The names of the participants and the book club will be changed to ensure anonymity. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research but a possible disadvantage is that your child might not like the idea of being recorded.

Your child's participation will contribute to the knowledge of the reading habits of children in Nigeria. The outcomes from the study may be shared in academic or educational contexts in the form of a conference presentation or an article in an academic journal, but all names will remain anonymised. If you would like further information about the research, please get in touch via the contact details below. Otherwise, I would be most grateful if you would complete and return the attached consent form.

Many thanks for your help.

Isang Awah

Tel. Nos: +234 803 704 4434 (Nigeria); E-mail: iua21@cam.ac.uk

PARTICIPANTS' PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that he/ she is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

☐

3. I agree that my child will take part in the above project.

☐

Name of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature

APPENDIX C (Information Sheet and Consent Form for the Staff of Krown Book Club)

My name is Isang Awah and I am a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, UK. I am carrying out research for my Doctoral thesis on the topic ‘Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria’.

The purpose of this document is to request your consent to participate in this study for a period of six months (specifically during the vacation periods for the second and third terms in 2017). I have also requested other staff of Krown Book Club (KBC) to participate in the study which will have 9–12 year olds who attend KBC in the afore-mentioned period as the main participants of the research. The aim of the study is to understand how, what, when and why children in Nigeria read for pleasure, and the factors that affect their engagement with reading for pleasure. It is hoped that this understanding will lead to strategies that will help Nigerian children to become more engaged readers. The Krown Book Club (KBC) has been chosen to participate in the project because it strongly promotes reading for pleasure, and can, through its vacation programme, provide the opportunity for me to interact with children, and collect in-depth data on their engagement with reading for pleasure.

My research will involve interviewing the participants, observing their reading habits, having them make a collage of their leisure time activities, and having them complete questionnaires. To help me get a broad picture of the participants’ engagement with reading, questionnaires will be administered to the participants’ parents and the staff of KBC. KBC staff will be interviewed, too. In other words, you will complete a questionnaire and may take part in an interview about the children’s reading habits. The interviews will be recorded, and notes will be made of my interactions with all the participants.

There are no anticipated risks associated with this research. There are no monetary benefits for KBC or the participants. However, participation will contribute to the knowledge of the reading habits of children in Nigeria. Your identity, as well as the identity of both KBC and all the participants, will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. My research will be shared with my supervisor and advisor who are academics at the University of Cambridge, and with the examiners of my PhD dissertation. Outcomes from the study may be shared in academic or educational contexts in the form of a conference presentation or an article in an academic journal but all names will remain anonymised.

Please note that your participation is voluntary, and that you may refuse to answer any question, and are free to withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason, and without penalty of any kind. If you would like any further information about the research, please get in touch via the contact details that are given below. Otherwise, I would be most grateful if you would complete and return the attached consent form.

Many thanks for your help.

Isang Awah

Tel. Nos: +234 803 704 4434 (Nigeria); E-mail: iua21@cam.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (KBC STAFF)

Title of Project:

Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

☐

3. I agree that I will take part in the above project.

☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

APPENDIX D (Cover Letter and Consent Form for Parents' Questionnaire)

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in the study, 'Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria'. To help me get a broad picture of the participants' engagement with reading for pleasure, I seek to interact with the participants' parents and the staff of KBC. I therefore send this form to request your consent to participate in this study by completing the attached questionnaire.

Once again, I would like to state the following: There are no anticipated risks associated with this research. There are no monetary benefits for KBC or the participants. However, participation will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the reading habits of children in Nigeria. It is hoped that this understanding will lead to strategies that will help Nigerian children to become more engaged readers, and also provide evidence of the link between reading and academic achievement. Please be assured again that your identity, as well as the identity of both KBC and all the participants, will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. My research will be shared with my supervisor and advisor who are academics at the University of Cambridge, and with the examiners of my PhD dissertation. Outcomes from the study may be shared in academic or educational contexts in the form of a conference presentation or an article in an academic journal but all names will remain anonymised.

Please note that your participation is voluntary, and that you may refuse to answer any question, and are free to withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason. Also, be assured that your responses will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

If you would like any further information about the research, please get in touch via the contact details that are given below. Otherwise, I would be most grateful if you would complete and return the attached consent form.

Many thanks for your help.

Isang Awah

Tel. Nos: +234 803 704 4434 (Nigeria)

E-mail: iua21@cam.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of Project:

Reading for Pleasure in Nigeria: An In-depth Case Study of the Reading Habits of a Small Group of 9–12 Year Olds in Nigeria

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my participation in the questionnaire is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

☐

3. I agree that I will take part in the above questionnaire.

☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

APPENDIX E: Questionnaire for Main Participants



Hello! This is a short questionnaire which will ask you about the things you like doing, how you feel about reading, and the kinds of books you are interested in reading. It shouldn't take long: 10 or 15 minutes. Also, please remember that **this is not a test** or examination, and **there are no right or wrong answers to any question**. Please answer the questions as best as you can. Thank you!

About You

What is your name? _____

(Please be informed that your name will be changed when you return this questionnaire so that no-one will know who gave what answers.)

What class are you in at school? _____

Are you a ... ? (circle one answer) boy girl

How long have you attended KBC? _____

Please note that in this questionnaire, books refer to both printed books and e-books (books that are read on a computer, or tablet or phone), and reading refers to the reading of books, magazines, websites, newspapers and comics that you do that is **not** a part of your class reading or assignment.

1. What activities do you spend your free time on? From the list below, tick all that apply.

☐ Watching TV

☐ Social media

☐ Reading

☐ Sports

☐ Playing computer games

☐ Other - please state _____

2. How did you spend your free time last evening? Mention all the things you did. _____

3. What do you think about reading? Reading is _____

_____ (use your own words to describe reading).

4. (a) Do you regularly read any books, magazines, comics or newspapers? ____

(b) If no, go on to question 5. If yes, write in the lines below the books, magazines, comics and newspapers you have read recently. Write only one on each line. If you read only one or two, put those down in the left column.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

(c) Read down your list above and put a tick ☒ in the right column by the books that you read to the end.

5. (a) How many days in a week do you read when it is your choice (not assigned in school)? _____. (If you write '0', please skip 'b' and 'c' below and go to question 6).

(b) How much time do you spend reading each time you read by choice (not assigned in school)? _____ (give your answer in minutes).

(c) Who chooses the reading materials you read in your free time?

6. How often do you usually read each of the following reading materials?
Beside each text, write the number of times you read it in a week.

(i) Magazines e.g. *Genevieve*

(ii) Websites

(iii) Blogs/emails

(iv) Newspapers e.g. *Punch*

(v) Comics

(vi) Fiction Books (made-up stories)

(vii) Factual books (books about real people & things)

(viii) Poems

7. What types of books do you like to read? Tick all that apply.

☐ Adventure

☐ Comedy

☐ Horror/ghost

☐ Crime/detective

☐ Realistic teenage fiction

☐ War/spy-related stories

☐ Sci-fi/fantasy

☐ Sports-related fiction

☐ Animal-related stories

☐ Poetry

☐ Romance/relationships

☐ Historical fiction

☐ Biographies

☐ Picture books

☐ Drama

☐ Other (please state) _____

8. (a) Why do you read when you read? _____

(b) Do you think you read enough? _____

9. (a) What reading materials do you usually have at home? Tick all that apply.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comics | <input type="checkbox"/> Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction books | <input type="checkbox"/> Factual books | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) _____ | | |

(b) Where in your home are the reading materials usually kept?

10. Do you own any books yourself? Give an estimate of the number of books outside school assigned books you have. _____

11. (a) Is it easy to get or borrow the books you would like to read? _____

(b) If no, go on to question 12. If yes, write in the lines below all the sources from which you get reading materials.

12. I would read more if ... (Tick as many boxes as you find to be true)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I had more time | <input type="checkbox"/> My family encouraged me to read more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Someone read aloud to me | <input type="checkbox"/> My school encouraged me to read more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books were shorter | <input type="checkbox"/> Books were easier to read |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books had more pictures | <input type="checkbox"/> Books were cheaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My friends read more | <input type="checkbox"/> I could easily get books to read |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I had more books | <input type="checkbox"/> I had books about things I am interested in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) _____ | |

13. (a) Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?

Tick one, please: Yes _____ No _____

(b) If no, go on to question 14. If yes, write in the lines below the name(s) of your favourite author(s) or series.

14. (a) What are your preferred reading places at home, school, KBC, or in your community/city? Write the names of all the places where you usually read: _____

(b) Are these spaces always available for you to read when you want to read? _____

15. (a) Does anyone in your home, school or at KBC read books aloud to you? _

If yes, please state who: _____

(b) Are there people you read with, or talk about your reading with from among your family members, friends, teachers or staff of KBC? _____

If yes, please state who: _____

APPENDIX F: Questionnaire for the Parents of the Main Participants

Thank you, again, for consenting to complete this questionnaire. Please be reminded that **there are no right or wrong answers to any question, you may choose not to answer any question, and your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.** For the purposes of this questionnaire, books refer to both printed books and e-books. Reading materials refer to any text that can be read, printed or electronic (e.g. a version that is displayed on a computer), texts such as novels, comics, picture books, magazines, newspapers, poems, and so on.

About You

Your name: _____

Your gender: Please tick the appropriate box. Male ☐ Female ☐

Your occupation: _____

1. What activities do you spend most of your leisure time on? _____

2. What activities does your child spend most of his/her leisure time on:

o Watching TV

o Social media

o Reading

o Sports

o Playing computer games

o Other – please state _____

3. (a) Is it important for people to read for the pleasure of reading? _____

(b) Please give a reason for your answer: _____

4. (a) Would you say your child enjoys reading? _____

(b) Why would you say so? _____

5. (a) Does your child regularly read any books, magazines, comics or newspapers? ____
(b) If no, please go to question 7. If yes, please state the reading materials your child regularly reads: _____

(c) Who usually chooses what your child reads in his/her leisure time? _____

6. What types of books does s/he like to read? Tick all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Comedy | <input type="checkbox"/> Horror/ghost |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime/detective | <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic teenage fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> War/spy-related stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sci-fi/fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports-related fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal-related stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poetry | <input type="checkbox"/> Romance/relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biographies | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture books | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) _____ _____ | | |

7. (a) On how many days in a week would you say your child reads when it is his/her choice (not assigned in school)? _____. (If you write '0', please skip 'b' below and go to question 8).

(b) How many times a week does your child read for about 20 minutes or more when it is his/her choice (not assigned in school)? _____

8. Do you think your child reads enough? _____

9. (a) What reading materials do you regularly have at home? Tick all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comics | <input type="checkbox"/> Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction books | <input type="checkbox"/> Factual books | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) _____ _____ | | |

(b) Where in your home are the reading materials usually kept? _____

10. How many books of his/her own does your child have? Give an estimate of the number of books outside school assigned books s/he has. _____

11. Where does your child usually get the books s/he reads? Mention all the sources.

12. (a) Does anyone in your home read books aloud to your child? _____

If yes, please state who reads aloud to him/her: _____

(b) Does your child discuss any reading materials with you or anyone at home? _____

If yes, please state who s/he discusses the materials with: _____

13. Where in the home does your child read when s/he reads? Mention all the places, please. _____

14. Please complete the sentence. My child would read more if _____

APPENDIX G: Questionnaire for the Staff of KBC

Thank you, again, for consenting to complete this questionnaire. **Please be reminded that there are no right or wrong answers to any question, you may choose not to answer any question, and your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.** For the purposes of this questionnaire, books refer to both printed books and e-books. Reading materials refer to any text that can be read, printed or electronic (e.g. a version that is displayed on a computer), texts such as novels, comics, picture books, magazines, newspapers, poems, and so on.

About You

Your name: _____

Your gender: Please tick the appropriate box. Male ☐ Female ☐

How long have you worked at KBC? _____

1. What activities do you spend most of your leisure time on?

2. What are the popular activities that children spend their free time at KBC on? Rank the activities below with any number from 1 – 5, with 5 being the activity that is most popular and 1 being the activity that is least popular.

- ☐ Watching TV
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Arts & Crafts
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

3. (a) Which of these reading materials are available at KBC? Tick all that apply.

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biographies | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comics | <input type="checkbox"/> Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction books | <input type="checkbox"/> Factual books | <input type="checkbox"/> Comics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) _____ | | |

- (b) Are the children at KBC allowed to borrow the above reading materials? _____ If no, please go on to question 7. If yes, go on to question 4.

4. On the average, what percentage of children borrow reading materials from KBC and take them home to read? About _____ per cent.
5. (a) When the children return the borrowed reading materials, do they usually talk about them, or show interest in borrowing either similar books/magazines/comics or books by the same author? _____
- (b) Do you often have a child or several children request reading material based on discussions or the recommendation of a child who had previously borrowed/read the reading material? _____
6. (a) Are there any reading materials or authors that are frequently borrowed by the children at KBC? _____
- (b) If no, go on to question 7. If yes, please state some of the materials or authors:
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
7. (a) Are there books or authors that are often discussed by the children at KBC? _____
- (b) If no, go on to question 8. If yes, please state some of the books, series or authors
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
8. (a) Would you say that most children at KBC enjoy reading? _____
- (b) Why would you say so? _____
- _____
- _____
9. (a) Who chooses the texts the children read at KBC? _____
- (b) Do children sometimes request books that KBC does not have? _____

10. (a) How often do these activities take place at KBC? Tick one answer in each row.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Staff read aloud to the children | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> often |
| Children read aloud to other children | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> often |
| Author visits | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> often |
| Book discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> often |
| Other (specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> often |

(b) Which of the above activities would you say most children at KBC enjoy the most, and why? _____

11. (a) Do you observe any child(ren) at KBC reading for pleasure in his/her free time? ____

If yes, please answer (b) and (c), and if no, please go to question 12.

(b) How often do you observe this? _____

(c) On the average, how many children do you observe reading for pleasure daily?

12. (a) What are the popular places/rooms where children like to read for pleasure at

KBC? _____

(b) Do the children choose where they stay and read in their leisure time? _____

13. (a) What factors would you say most affect how much reading children at KBC do in their free time? _____

(b) Complete the sentence: More children at KBC would read more if _____

APPENDIX H: Interview Questions (for both one-on-one and group interviews)

Name: _____

Age: _____

Time spent at KBC: _____

Note: Reading materials refer to any text that can be read, printed or electronic (e.g. a version that is displayed on a computer), texts such as novels, comics, picture books, magazines, newspapers, poems, and so on.

1. What do you like to do in your free time? Why?
2. What do you think of reading? (Allow child to supply his/her own word(s)). Why?
3. Do you usually read in your free time? If yes, how often, and how much time do you spend reading?
4. What type of materials do you like to read? (novels, newspapers, comic books, picture books, magazines, etc.) Why?
5. Do you usually complete the materials you start reading? Why?
6. Do you usually have access to the materials you would like to read, I mean, is it easy for you to get the books or materials you would like to read? If yes/no, explain further.
7. What guides you in your choice of what to read? (popularity of material, peers, parents, teachers, subject, book cover etc.) Why?
8. Does anyone you know (your parents/guardians, siblings, best friends) do a lot of reading? If yes, who? Does s/he usually discuss books with you?
9. Does anyone in your home, at school or at KBC read books aloud to you? If yes, who?
10. Do you get to choose the books you read at home/school/KBC?
11. Do you get to choose where you stay and read at home/school/KBC?
12. What do you think about these book(s)? Have you read any of them? If yes, which?
13. Do you enjoy reading the texts that you are given at school? Why?

Additional Questions Introduced in Fieldwork Trip 2

14. Did anyone at home read aloud to you when you were a child? If yes, who? What do you think or remember of the experience?
15. At what age do you think you began to read independently?
16. Did you do much leisure reading when you were younger? If yes, what books did you read? Would you like to tell me about any of the books you recall either reading or being read to when you were younger?
17. Do you still enjoy reading the books you read when you were younger?
18. What language is used for communication in your home?
19. Do you understand any language apart from English? If yes, what language? Do you read in the language? If yes, is the experience of reading in the language different from reading in English?

APPENDIX I: A Grid that Maps the Questionnaires Items and Interview Questions to the Research Questions

| Research Question | Main Participants' Questionnaire | Parents' Questionnaire | KBC Staff' Questionnaire | Main Participants' Interview |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| 1. To what extent do 9–12 year olds motivated to attend the Krown Book Club (KBC) (the name has been changed to ensure anonymity) in Nigeria, engage in RfP? | 1, 2, 3, 4a, 5a, 5b, 6 | 2, 4a, 5a, 7a, 7b, 8 | 2, 4, 5a, 5b, 8a, 8b, 11, | 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 17 |
| 2. How, what, when and why do the 9–12 year olds in KBC read when they read, both within the book club and beyond the book club? | 3, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, 6, 7, 8a, 8b, 13a, 13b, 14a | 4a, 4b, 5b, 6, 7a, 7b, 13 | 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b, 10b, 11, 12a | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 13, 17 |
| 3a. What factors affect their engagement with RfP? | 5c, 8a, 9a, 9b, 10, 11a, 12, 14a, 14b, 15a, 15b | 1, 3a, 3b, 5c, 9a, 9b, 10, 11, 12a, 12b, 13, 14 | 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 5a, 5b, 7a, 8a, 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 11, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b | 1, 5b, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| 3b. What social networks and affordances exist to nurture and support their leisure reading? | 5c, 9a, 9b, 10, 11a, 11b, 12, 14a, 14b, 15a, 15b | 1, 3a, 3b, 9a, 9b, 10, 11, 12a, 12b, 13, 14 | 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5a, 5b, 7a, 8a, 8b, 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 11, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b | 1, 3, 5b, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, |